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The intergenerational transmission of educational values from working-class mothers to their adolescent daughters in two Western Massachusetts mill towns.

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THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF EDUCATIONAL VALUES FROM WORKING-CLASS MOTHERS TO THEIR ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS IN TWO WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS MILL TOWNS

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

To my grandmother who asked me, "Why pursue an education?"

and

To my daughter, who is the answer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout my post-secondary education, I sought my own path as I had always seen connections between ideas and information in ways that were often difficult to articulate to others. Fortunately, I encountered academics who were confident enough in themselves to support someone who did not fit the traditional mold, who was not comfortable following a traditional path, and who was not afraid to cross disciplines. It is to them and my friends, family members, and colleagues below that I owe a debt of gratitude for their patience and persistence.

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experiences, and strategies about how to complete our studies, despite competing demands on our time, were invaluable toward completing this study.

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Finally, to the participants who opened their homes and their experiences to me and without whom this study would not have been possible, to them, I say THANK YOU, and I wish you all the happiness and success you desire.

ABSTRACT

THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF EDUCATIONAL VALUES FROM WORKING-CLASS MOTHERS TO THEIR ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS IN TWO MASSACHUSETTS MILL TOWNS

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This study was designed to identify what, if any, communications occurred between working-class mothers, who had experience as sole supporters of families, and their adolescent daughters to socialize the daughters to the role of education in the daughters' lives. Additionally, this study was designed to determine whether there was an intergenerational transmission of educational values between working-class mothers and their daughters, and to determine if mothers are their daughters' first educational role models or mentors.

The participants were a homogeneous sampling of seven Caucasian working-class mother and daughter pairs from two rural western Massachusetts mill towns. After an initial questionnaire which helped to identify prospective participants, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the pairs and a topical guide was used to gather comparable data from all participants. Thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the data.

Participants in this study provided insights into both multigenerational and intergenerational messages transmitted across generations and the mechanisms by which those messages were transmitted. They also provided insights into how messages from their working-class work ethic both shaped and contradicted their aspirations for success. The intersection of social class and the mothers' experiences as sole supporters revealed specific messages about working-class values and what it meant for the participants to be successful or not. The mothers in this study used these messages to purposefully push their daughters toward success, which they believed began with a four-year college degree. Finally, this study revealed that these working-class mothers were their daughters' first educational role models and mentors. However, due to gaps in procedural knowledge and the mothers' passivity in assisting daughters in obtaining information that would help them prepare for college, there became a point where most mothers became ineffective mentors, thus highlighting the need for positive role models and mentors, for both mothers and daughters. Additionally, several unarticulated contradictions emerged between the messages and with regard to the participants' desire for success. The paper concludes with a discussion about implications for future research and practice.

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: MOTHERS' MURMURINGS

> We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts. They may be read, or chanted, or experienced electronically, or come to us, like the murmurings of our mothers, telling us what convention demands. Whatever their form or medium, these stories have formed us all; they are what we must use to make new fictions, new narratives (Heilbrun, 1989, p. 37).

In "Mother's Murmurings," Carolyn Heilbrun's delicate phrasing does not quite capture the thundering resound that our mother's words and phrasings have on our lives and the way we live our lives. Over and over again, throughout my graduate studies and my teaching career, women have told me stories about the impact their mothers have had on their education. In my teaching I hear stories about women's mothers encouraging them to pursue their education or of grandmothers, who after their deaths, left these women money so they could pursue higher education. I also hear many of my female students talk about pursuing their education in order to set an example for their own children.

In my personal life, I am a voracious reader of biography, particularly women's biography. I am continually struck by women's discussion of the effect that their mothers have had on their pursuit of education and career. Sometimes the mother's impact was direct and involved; sometimes the mother's impact was a seemingly insignificant comment that propelled the daughter. Occasionally, the daughter's pursuit of higher education and advancement was to live the life that her mother always wanted to live. In fact, in her book, *Women's Reality*, Anne Wilson Schaef (1981) found that mothers often encourage their daughters to achieve what they did not.

As I began my doctoral studies, I became increasingly interested in the communications that occur between mothers and their daughters about education, particularly regarding the relationship between education and economic self-sufficiency. In my reading of feminist qualitative studies, I found references to communications between mothers and daughters (Arnold, 1995; Holland & Eisenhart, 1990; Luttrell, 1997; Sidel, 1990); however, these communications were not the focus of the research. In my teaching, I witnessed women, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, return to the college classroom to "better their lives" to "set an example" for their children. Likewise, Luttrell (1997) found mothers returning to school to become, in their words, "better mothers" (p. 111) and to be role models for their children. I began to wonder what mothers overtly or covertly communicated to their daughters about education and careers. What did they communicate about the economic impact of education on their careers? What information did these communications contain? What impact did these communications have? What examples did the mothers set for their daughters? Was there an intergenerational, or multigenerational, effect? Were mothers educational role models and/or mentors for their daughters?

The seeds of this dissertation topic have been germinating for quite some time. From my own experience with my high school friends, I wondered why some people went on to college while others did not. Why did some of my college-bound friends opt to get married immediately after high school and put off their educational aspirations? Why did others attend college and move back to our hometown only to work in seemingly dead end jobs that did not make use of their education and their potential? Why did others, despite teen pregnancy, single parenthood, substance abuse, or other

interruptions in their life course persist in pursuing their education? What were the contextual factors that fragmented the life courses of so many individuals who seemed to be on the same college track? What role did the individual families play in their decisions to go to college or not? What were the messages given to them by their families about education and the role it plays in their lives? I reflected back on my own reasons and wondered. I reflected back on the conversations with my own grandmother and with my own mother and wondered. What were their mothers' murmuring?

A. The Problem

In the United States, the number of single parent households supported by women is on the rise. According to the United States Bureau of the Census, 86% of single parent households are supported by women (Commerce, 1996). These women and their children are disproportionately poorer, representing 54% of all poor families in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994). In 1991, 64% of the net increase in poor families within the U.S. was due to the increase in the number of poor families headed by women (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). Over 70% of single white mothers and over 80% of single black mothers are raising their children in poverty (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). The average single mother in poverty supports a family of 3.4 persons (U.S. Department of Labor, 1984). Women who maintain families earn 29% less than one-earner families maintained by men (Commerce, 1996).

Women who maintain families, especially those with children under age 18, have more serious socioeconomic problems than other women in the population. Some of these problems include higher rates of unemployment and higher rates of underemployment (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1993). In addition, these women are more

vulnerable to layoffs and are less likely to have jobs with fringe benefits (Doeringer & Piore, 1975; Northrop, 1990; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1991). More single women than single men are concentrated in working-class occupations (Syzmanski, 1983), typically pink collar jobs in which they earn too much money to be eligible for social services and too little money to provide themselves and their children with adequate health care, and in some cases, adequate food, shelter, and clothing.

Women who maintain families also have a lower average educational attainment than men (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1995). Several factors attribute to the lower levels of educational attainment and the resulting lower levels of economic achievement in poor and working-class women. Schein (1995) identified three factors, the ABC's, that were consistent in her study of impoverished single mothers: ""A" is the absence of the education and training necessary to qualify for a well-paying job; "B" is the betrayal by the mate, the father of the children; and "C" is negative childhood experiences and nonsupportive family influences" (p. 27). Not included in Schein's ABC's were the issues of gender and social class, two circumstances which I argue contribute just as significantly to the status of poor and working-class women.

Wright (2000) defines social status, also known as social class, as "social categories sharing subjectively salient attributes used by people to rank those categories within a system of economic stratification" (p. 717), while Warner (1960) defines class as shared understandings of people about social rankings, and Bourdieu (1984a) defines class by socially determined inequalities of resources. The gradations of social class are typically classified as upper class; upper middle class; middle class; lower middle class; lower class, also known as the working-class; and the underclass, also known as the

poor Warner, 1960; Bourdieu, 1984b; Wright, 2000). Distinctions between the levels of social class are determined by the amount of power, prestige, and resources available to them. Intertwined with social status is the double-edged sword of gender. While some argue that gender is a social class in its own right (Morgan, 1975), I believe that gender has specific meaning for women from different social classes, and gender and social status join forces in their effect on inequality (Barrett, 1980), both educational and economic inequality. As I will discuss in Chapter II, gender and social class merge to create distinct messages about education and careers for women.

In Chapter II, I will also discuss possible reasons why these single mothers and their children are poorer than their middle- and upper-class counterparts. One reason may be that most of these women work in female-dominated professions, which typically pay less than male-dominated professions. Even within the same class, working-class positions that are male dominated (blue collar) earn significantly more than those that are female dominated (pink collar). Further, working-class is defined as not owning the means of production, not possessing organizational assets, and having few skills or credential assets (Wright, 1985). An additional reason for these single mothers being poorer is that these women have lower levels of educational attainment, and studies show that one's level of education has a direct impact on one's level of economic achievement. Studies also show that the education level and the socioeconomic status of mothers, rather than fathers, have a more significant impact on the education and the economic attainment of their children (Keith, 1988; Smith, 1981; Smith, 1991). These facts are then further compounded in rural families, which are economically vulnerable under new welfare legislation, not only because of their low

levels of education (Porterfield & McBride, 1997) and low income jobs (Simmerman & Garkovich, 1988), but also because of the limited employment options in rural communities (Lichter, Johnson, & McLaughlin, 1994). As a result, if we consider mothers to be their daughters' first educational role models and mentors, then the communications that occur between mothers and their daughters about education and careers becomes vitally important.

B. The Purpose

The purpose of this research is not to test a hypothesis but to explore theoretical questions related to working-class mothers, who have been sole supporters of families, and their adolescent daughters and their communications about education. Through qualitative study, it was my intent to 1.) discover how working-class mothers socialized their daughters to the role of education in their lives; 2.) discover what, if any, communications occurred between working-class mothers and daughters about education; 3.) to "capture" the communications, if they occurred; 4.) to gain insight into the covert and overt messages given and messages received from those communications; and 5.) to identify the process of how, and if, the mothers and the daughters arrived at their own meaning of the value and the role that education played in their lives.

This research also sought to determine if there was an intergenerational transmission of beliefs or values about education transmitted from working-class mothers to their adolescent daughters, whether these beliefs or values were impacted by their working-class status and/or the mothers' experiences as sole supporters of families, and whether these mothers were their daughters' first educational role models

or mentors. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to gather data and thematic analysis was used to identify themes.

It is my position that given the increasing number of female-headed households, women need to become more aware of their economic capability and the role that education can play in their lifelong economic achievement. As discussed earlier, since the mother's level of education is the best predictor of the children's level of educational attainment, and research on parental influence on children's educational achievement shows that maternal influence is stronger than paternal influence (Smith, 1981), then it is logical to assume that mothers are the most influential role models and mentors in their children's education. If we accept the premise that mothers are children's first educational mentors and role models, then it is also logical to assume that the communications that occur between mother and child about education will be most influential. When you consider this line of reasoning with the research which shows that mentors are important for low-income and working-class females, the impact of the communications that occur with females' first educational mentor, their mother, becomes staggeringly important.

C. The Significance Of This Research

The significance of this research is to discover first, whether there is an intergenerational transmission of educational values and beliefs between working-class mothers and daughters, and, second, whether these mothers are their daughters' first role models or mentors. An additional significance of this research is whether social reality (the increase in the number of female headed households) has any effect on communications that occur between working-class mothers and their daughters about education and careers. I chose working-class mothers who were sole supporters as it was

my assumption that these mothers may be struggling financially to make ends meet and may, based on personal experience, have opinions about the value of education and its economic impact and, therefore, may be transmitting those opinions to their daughters. At least one study has shown a correlation between a mother's background characteristics such as grandmother's schooling and her children's verbal facility (Parcel & Menaghan, 1990). Parcel and Menaghan's (1990) findings suggest "that the social structural mechanisms which relegate women to lower-paying jobs have intergenerational implications for child outcomes" (p. 144). In the case of their study, the outcome is a lessened verbal facility that may have long-term implications for the children's educational and thus economic opportunities.

While there has been little research on mothers as mentors, there has been some research on mothers as role models (Handel, 1991; Sholomaskas & Axelrod, 1986; Spillers & Katz, 1989). There has also been at least one study on the similarities and differences between mothers and mentors of women where the author found mothers and mentors to be perceived quite similarly (Lewis, 1991).

While the terms mentors and role models may seem close in nature, there is a fundamental distinction: mentors provide information and guidance through personal interaction and verbal direction while role models may only provide guidance through their actions. Mentoring is typically an intentional act, where a mentor and a protegé purposefully engage in their respective roles. Role modeling, on the other hand, is typically an unintentional act. A role model is typically chosen by another to be emulated

because of desired[1] characteristics. Houston (1996) defines role model as "real or theoretical persons perceived as being ideal standards for emulation in one or a number of selected roles," (p. 151). Further, the term "role model" is typically associated with a positive outcome; however, it is my contention that a role model, who guides only by example, may produce a negative outcome.

There has been little qualitative research conducted on the communications that occur between mothers and their daughters about education or career aspirations (Handel, 1991; Spillers & Katz, 1989), even though women have noted the influence of these communications within several studies on women and education and on professional women. If these communications are the first contacts that females have with their mentor/role model mothers, what are the mothers saying to their daughters? What do these communications consist of? What impact do these communications have on the daughters? These are the questions I seek to answer in this research.

In Chapter II, I will discuss the research on gender discrimination in education and careers and how it impacts women's economic achievement. I will also discuss the influence of family on educational attainment, particularly issues related to socioeconomic status. I will also present research on how the mothers' gender role attitudes, occupation, and level of education influence their daughters' level of education and occupational choice. Then I discuss how mothers serve as role models and mentors for their daughters. Given the evidence I present for the impact of mothers on their daughters' education and career choices, I then assert that mothers are their

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[1]I purposely use the term "desired" as opposed to "desirable" because role models are not always chosen for characteristics that are desirable to the general population.

daughters' first educational role models and mentors. Therefore, I argue that research needs to be conducted on the communications that occur between mothers and their daughters about education and the impact or role it can play in their lives.

In Chapter III, I discuss my position as a feminist researcher and the influence of feminist research methodology on this study. I will then review the literature on the special issues that arise when interviewing women and adolescents. I will then introduce the participants and the process of soliciting participants and of gaining informed consent. I then discuss the interview methodology and the methods of data analysis.

The findings will be presented in three chapters, setting forth the dominant messages from the study, the mechanisms through which those messages were conveyed, and the contradictions of the messages. In Chapter IV, I will set forth the covert and overt multigenerational messages of the working-class work ethic used by the participants. I will present the mothers' messages of their experiences as sole supporters. Lastly, I will discuss the covert and overt messages used by the participants to describe those who are successful and those who are not.

In Chapter V, I will present how the lack of parental support received by the mothers, their own experiences as sole supporters of families, and the values of the working-class work ethic converged, resulting in the mothers purposefully pushing their daughters to become successful. I will then present a case study as evidence of how the successful role modeling and mentoring relationship of one mother/daughter pair and their resulting level of procedural knowledge was in stark contrast to that of the other participants, which emphasizes the need for positive role models and mentors.

In Chapter VI, I will present the contradictions between the messages of the work ethic, the messages of success, and the mechanisms through which they are conveyed. Additionally, I will present the participants' views on role models and mentors. Lastly, I will end the chapter with a discussion about how the contradictions and the lack of procedural knowledge provide a lens through which to view the purpose of role models and mentors in the participants' lives.

In the concluding chapter, I revisit the theoretical questions of this study, discuss the findings and implications for future research and future practice, and offer a conclusion for this study and a final word on feminist research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> The education and training that a woman receives by virtue of her class background provide a highly significant contribution to the position she will occupy in the labour force. Yet the relationship she has to the class structure by virtue of her wage labour (or her ownership of the means of production) will be substantially influenced by the mediation of this direct relationship through dependence on men and responsibility for domestic labour and childcare. For working class women this may result in simultaneous direct exploitation by capital via their own wage labour and indirect exploitation via...a male breadwinner. For bourgeois women this may result in simultaneous ownership of, yet lack of control over, capital (Barrett, 1980, p. 139).

A. Gender Discrimination in Education

Women's access to formal education has been a long and expensive struggle. Briefly, American women's access to formal education was granted because men believed that women, as the mothers of the children of this country, who were educated in the domestic arts and who were morally educated would have a beneficial impact on the country's children. Several scholars have written extensively about the struggles women have endured to gain equal access to education, including women who literally bought other women's access to education. [For more about the history of women's education see Axtell, 1974; Griffin, 1984; Pearson, Shaulik, & Touchton, 1989; Woody, 1966.] Even though women gained access to formal education, their education was not equal, and, as will be discussed, some scholars believe that women's education is still not equal. Women were and still are being tracked into certain disciplines and often overtly or covertly discouraged from disciplines which are typically considered "male" such as math and the sciences (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Additionally, some scholars believe that even today women are not afforded equal access to education even when they are in the same classroom as males due to discriminatory practices in the classrooms and the

school systems (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Despite legislation, such as Title IX which was enacted in 1972 to force schools to provide equal access for women to education and to reduce sex discrimination in the schools, many schools are still not in compliance (American Association of Colleges, 1982; Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

The unequal access to education becomes more pronounced at the post secondary level, despite reports from the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (USNCES) to the contrary. In 1994, according to the USNCES, there were 20% more women enrolled in colleges than men [No. 281]. However, these figures are misleading. While there are more women enrolled in colleges, the total number of women in the population was 2% higher than the total number of men (cited in Commerce, 1996); therefore, an equal percentage (7%) of men and women attended college in 1994. However, of the total number of people with bachelor's degrees in 1993, 10% more men held bachelor's degrees than women. When this figure is adjusted to account for the difference in the total number of men and women in the overall population, 13% more men have four-year college degrees than do women.

Of the degrees conferred in 1994, women earned 31% more associate's degrees (Statistics, 1994, No. 300). In 1993, women earned 3% more less-than-one year awards (e.g.,, certificate programs) and they earned 30% more less-than-four year awards from post-secondary curriculums (Statistics, 1994, No. 301). There is a striking difference in the levels of education between first professional degrees and doctorates: 34% more men earn first professional degrees and 39% more men earn doctorates (Statistics, 1994, No. 300). Women not only hold fewer four-year college degrees, but of the women who obtained bachelor's degrees, they took longer than men to complete their degrees (cited

in Commerce, 1996). (See Appendix A, Post-secondary Attainment Statistics by Gender, for a chart summarizing these statistics.) Again, if these numbers are adjusted to reflect the total number of men versus women in the population, these figures take on a striking contrast. Clearly, despite fewer males in the general population, men in the United States have higher levels of formal education than do women. These numbers may also be interpreted to mean that the historical fact of men having greater access to education because of their gender continues.

B. The Impact of Education on Economic Achievement

1. Gender and Its Relationship to Education and Economic Achievement.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the median weekly income of men 25 years old and over is $588, while the median weekly income of women 25 years old and over is $428. There are two reasons for this discrepancy and both are related to gender. The first reason is that the degree(s) earned and the fields in which they are earned have an impact on the graduate's future income potential; therefore, a review of the types of degrees dominated by women versus those dominated by men and the salaries offered by field is warranted.

Men have traditionally dominated fields such as engineering (84.6%) and computer science (71.9%). In 1994, the average salary offers to students graduating with a bachelor's degree in these two fields were in the low to mid $30's, with a master's degree in the mid $30's, and a doctorate in the mid $50's (National Association of Colleges and Employers, No. 298).

Women, on the other hand, dominate the fields of library science (89.2%) and home economics (89.2%); however, income levels for these two fields are not given

(Statistics, 1994, No. 302). The closest fields for which there are numbers are the humanities and the social sciences in which the average salary offers for students with a bachelor's degree were in the low to mid $20's. No figures were given for these fields at the master's or doctorate levels (National Association of Colleges and Employers, No. 298). However, as noted earlier, more women earn two-year or less degrees, which were also not represented in these figures.

As previously stated, men have higher levels of education than women; this is significant because it means that they also have greater access to careers that offer higher salaries. Equal education, however, does not mean equal pay. For example, of the men and women who had not graduated from high school, men earned double the incomes of women. In 1994, at the associate's degree level, women earned 40% less than men, at the bachelor's degree level 48% less than men, and at the doctorate level, although men's and women's incomes were closer, women still earned 11% less than men (Statistics, 1994, No. 302). Nearly a decade later, the income by level of education is not much improved (Stroops, 2004).

Even when men and women with the same levels of education and within the same occupation are compared, women earn significantly less than men. In technical fields, sales, administrative support, and precision production fields, men's incomes were 31% higher than women's. Among operators, fabricators, and laborers fields, men's incomes were 28% higher. In managerial and professional occupations, men's median weekly earnings were 27% higher than women's; in the service fields, men's incomes were 26% higher than women's; while in the farming, forestry, and fishing industries, men's incomes were 15% higher than women's incomes. On average, men's

median weekly earnings were 26% higher than women's median weekly earnings. In dollars and cents, for every dollar men make, women make seventy-four cents. In real time, this means that women in the same professions have to work approximately 1 1/4 times, or 125%, as long to earn the same income as men (U.S. Department of Labor, 1984, No. 663; Weinberg, 2004).

While education alone does not increase women's income levels, access to education in fields that are traditionally male dominated affords women access to a higher level of income than career fields traditionally dominated by women.

2. Women's Work.

While women are making headway into male-dominated professions, certain jobs are still dominated by women: clerical positions, retail and personal sales, childcare workers, hairdressers, telephone operators, domestic help, and teachers (Weinberg, 2004). Female-dominated professions typically deal with people or things and not data, and are, therefore, typically referred to as "pink collar" work (Howe, 1977). With the exception of teaching, these pink collar jobs require little training, and each of them offers low wages (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994), and are more likely to have little or no benefits. Sleeter and Grant (1988) attribute three factors to women's predominance in these fields. The first factor has to do with women's socialization, the resulting lack of training and education, and family commitments. In fact, these family commitments often contribute to what Bose, Feldberg, and Sokoloff (1987) have termed the "rag doll theory of women's labor force participation" wherein women are "pushed" and "pulled" in and out of the workforce to attend to family commitments.

The second factor is that women are excluded from occupational opportunities at the hiring and promotion levels simply because of their gender. Third, according to Sleeter and Grant (1988), women dominate these fields because these professions are considered women's work. Additionally, studies have shown that the mere fact that women predominate certain fields lowers the pay rate (e.g.,, pediatric medicine and law); and, as women begin to enter and dominate other fields, the pay rate in that field also begins to lower (Janssen-Jurreit, 1982; Treiman & Hartman, 1981).

Unemployment rates by educational attainment show that men are unemployed at rates 14% higher than women (Statistics, 1986, No. 648). However, the figures for persons not in the workforce indicate that more than double the number of women were reported as not being in the workforce in 1995. Women cited not participating in the paid workforce because of family responsibilities at a rate 84% higher than men and for childcare issues and transportation issues at a rate 15% higher than men (Statistics, 1986, no. 636; Sivard, 1995). Women are also more likely to work part time and more likely to be underemployed in positions where the pay is less, often at or below poverty level, which has been referred to as the "feminization of poverty" (Harris, 1993; Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986; Lefkowitz & Withorn, 1986; Pearce, 1978; Pearce, 1983; Pearce, 1989; Polakow, 1993).

Historically, women's roles revolve around the role of family caretaker, and taking on work outside of the home is in addition to their household responsibilities. Rosen (1987) refers to it as the "double day;" women work all day only to arrive home and manage the children and the household. Sivard refers to it as a "triple role" in which women are responsible for reproduction, managing and/or maintenance of the household,

and for working in the labor force. However, two of three of these roles are unpaid and, as a result, not as respected (Sivard, 1995). Women have traditionally been part of the production process; much of their work is unpaid (e.g., extensive volunteer activities, child rearing, household, family health, elder care) and not represented in the gross national product. On the one hand, the perception is that there is no economic value to women's work (Sivard, 1995), and, on the other hand, many economies are "based on the employment of women as a source of cheap labor" (Rosen, 1987).

Weis (1988) refers to "women's double bind" where women define themselves by their home and family but also work outside of the home. Despite the fact that women may work outside of the home, the number of hours of labor required within the home remains the same for the women, which has been referred to as "role strain" (Baruch & Barnett, 1983). Some researchers refer to it as "sex segregation ghetto," which they believe is perpetuated by capitalism and patriarchy which do not allow women to earn a living wage and thus encourage them to marry and become dependent upon a man for their livelihood (Hartmann, 1976; Weis, 1988). Other researchers view this segregation as social engineering that perpetuates women's dependence on men (Abramovitz, 1988; Miller, 1990), while others point out that without this pool of low-wage labor, certain industries will no longer be viable (Smith, 1984). While these perspectives may seem radical, it is impossible to overlook the fact that fields dominated by women are traditionally paid lower wages and that women who support families can barely exist on wages from these traditionally female occupations.

A U.S. General Accounting Report in 1991 found that even when women work full-time, their earnings are often only near or below the poverty line, and other research

found that full-time employment does not solve female poverty (Corcoran, Duncan, & Hill, 1984; Spalter-Roth, Soto, & Zandniapour1994). Crittendon (2001) notes that uneducated, married mothers are less likely to be employed and that their homemaking and childcare activities are of more economic value than any (under)paid employment they are capable of obtaining.

There does seem to be a growing awareness by women of these occupational wage discrepancies as more women are moving into what were once traditionally male-dominated professions. In fact, the awareness of these discrepancies and the resulting economic impact is beginning to appear in research on young women. Weis noted in her 1988 study on working-class girls that they wanted to enter careers that allowed them to earn an income sufficient to be free from, or less dependent on, the economic control of a man and his income. Sidel (1990) heard similar responses during her study of young women, as did Luttrell (1997) during her study of women returning to school to obtain their GED (Graduate Equivalency Diploma).

3. Educational Achievement.

The academic training necessary to pursue post-secondary education and enter careers usually begins with coursework in secondary and high school. However, while women statistically receive higher grades than males in high school, and, in college, and they receive an equal number of honorariums, women are less likely to pursue advanced degrees. Women also receive less financial aid to go to college or to pursue advanced degrees (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Sivard, 1995).

Despite the fact that females receive higher grades in high school, in 1995, the women's SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) scores were lower than men's with males'

verbal scores only 1% higher than females' and with males' math scores 8% higher (Commerce, 1996, No. 274). It is interesting to note that in 1995, only 46.4% of the test takers were male, which means that more females than males took the test and presumably more females than males were interested in advancing to college. A similar trend exists for ACT scores (American College Testing Program). In 1995, males tested slightly higher in math and science with the females testing slightly higher in reading and English (Commerce, 1996, No. 275). Again, only 44% of the test takers were male. This trend holds true even at the college level when women are seeking to advance to the graduate level. Women score lower on all sections of the Graduate Record Exam, the Graduate Management Achievement Test, Law School Admissions Test, and MCAchievement Test (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

If females receive higher grades and more honorariums than males in high school, why is it that women do so poorly on the standardized tests required to advance their education? And, why is it fewer women than men are completing baccalaureate degrees?

Women's academic achievement is also affected by their high school drop out rates. Of the students who dropped out of school in 1994 without completing high school grades 10-12, females were more likely to drop out (males 19.5%, females 20.7%). Hispanic females had the highest drop out rate at 10.1% of all females, more than any other group, male or female (cited in Commerce, 1996). In 1993, 46% of Hispanic women had less than a high school diploma (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994). According to Sadker and Sadker (1994), when girls drop out of school, unlike boys, they rarely return; perhaps this is due to teenage pregnancy and child rearing. The teen drop out rate may be

a trend that continues into the college years and combined with less access to financial aid, may be why more women enter college than men, but fewer women finish college.

Despite these negatives, there are positive trends in women's education. There has been an overall increase from 1987 to 1994 in the number of women enrolled in college; 16% for two-year programs, 25% for four-year programs, and 9% for graduate programs (cited in Commerce, 1996). During this same period, the total number of black and Hispanic women enrolled in college has increased dramatically, 25% and 38% respectively. Additionally, "the number of bachelor's and doctor's degrees awarded to Hispanic women has more than doubled between 1977 and 1990" (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994, p. 6). Although these positive changes are occurring, women still have unequal access to formal education and unequal access to the financial resources necessary to pursue post-secondary education.

Another positive trend for women is the increasing overlap of women's and men's work. More and more women are entering the professional ranks of medicine, law, and academia, while men are becoming teachers (albeit science and math teachers, who are paid higher signing bonuses than other teachers), nurses, and clerical workers. However, while more women are moving into the professional ranks of business management, the glass ceiling still exists. In 1,500 of the largest U.S. corporations, 95% of the senior managers are men (Sivard, 1995). In 1990, *Fortune* magazine counted four thousand corporate heads and found that only nineteen of them were women (cited in Sivard, 1995). Why are there so few women professionals at the highest ranks of business? Several researchers cite the need for mentors to guide women through their professional careers, beginning in high school and through college (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Arnold,

1995; Chase, 1995; Walker & Mehr, 1992). Since there are few women either teaching in or working in male-dominated disciplines, women do not have role models that they can identify with and do not have mentors to show them how to navigate the systems. Mentors have proven to be particularly effective with women simultaneously serving as role models and helping them to understand the structure and politics of the professional ranks.

C. The Influence of Family on Educational Attainment

Parental ideals about education; resources for cultural capital; food, shelter, and clothing; number of siblings; level of parents' education can impact children's educational attainment. This impact is often reflected in the offspring's economic attainment. Within the literature, there are four main areas of research on the influence that families have on the educational attainment of children. They are: parenting style; family size and structure; socioeconomic status of the family, and related socioeconomic issues; and parental expectations of the offspring's attainment. While it is virtually impossible to isolate the individual effect of each category, as will be discussed below, researchers have attributed specific outcomes to these areas of study.

1. Parenting Style.

Research shows a connection between parenting styles and children's education and occupational achievement (Eccles, 1993; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Melby & Conger, 1996). Studies have shown that daughters from homes with warm supportive environments that encouraged autonomy and educational attainment were more likely to be career oriented as adults (Tomlinson-Keasey & Warren, 1986; Warren, 1986). Several studies show that parents' educational level was positively related to parenting behaviors and that parenting behaviors were positively related to children's academic

performance studies (DeBaryshe, Patterson, & Capaldi 1993; Lamborn, et al., 1991; Melby, 1996; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Darling 1992). Professional women, for example, were shown to use more intensive, time-consuming child rearing techniques (e.g., reading to, negotiation with, developing independence and critical thinking skills in children) than less educated women (Hays, 1996). Kohn and Schooler's studies (1973; 1978; 1982; 1983) show that parental work conditions that entail little complexity, routinization, and low autonomy erode intellectual flexibility, and result in parents' psychological distress (Lennon, 1987; Miller, et al., 1979; Miller, 1988), while other studies show that parents with higher levels of stress are less attentive and responsive to their children and less likely to provide stimulation (Belsky, 1984; Menaghan, 1983). Additional studies have shown that longer work hours are associated with higher levels of family conflict (Piotrkowski, Rapoport, & Rapoport, 1987; Voydanoff & Majka, 1988), and this distress may be worse for working mothers (Lennon, 1987).

Hoffman (1979) found that working mothers were more likely to encourage their children to be more independent than non-working mothers. Hoff-Ginsberg and Tardiff (1995) point "to several studies in which it was demonstrated that mothers from higher socioeconomic strata are more authoritative than mothers from lower socioeconomic strata" (p. 18). Other studies have shown that an authoritative child-rearing style is related to non-traditional attitudes of children (Arditti, Godwin, & Scanzoni, 1991; Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989), and another study (Ex & Janssens, 1998) revealed that the more the mother worked, the less conformist her child rearing style and the more non-traditional her daughter's gender role attitudes. Gender role attitudes will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

2. Family Size and Structure.

Family size and structure may also impact educational attainment. In support of the positive psychological effect of two-parent families on children's educational attainment, Saucier and Ambert (1982) found that adolescents from intact families (two-parent families) are more optimistic about the future than those from homes in which there had been a separation, divorce, or parental death. Also, Milne, Myers, and Rosenthal (1986) found that children in two parent families had higher reading and math scores on achievement tests, but income was more of a mediating factor than was family size and structure.

Several studies show evidence of a negative impact of children raised in a single parent household. McLanahan (1985) found that children living in female-headed families were less likely to complete high school. Additionally, several studies indicate that adults who grew up in one-parent families complete fewer years of schooling (Duncan, 1967; Duncan & Duncan, 1969; Duncan, Featherman, & Duncan, 1972; Featherman & Hauser, 1976; Hauser & Featherman, 1976). Amato and Keith (1991) found that parental divorce is linked to low educational attainment in daughters more than sons. According to Hetherington, Camara, and Featherman (1983) mother-only households have a negative effect on IQ scores, boys' aptitude tests, but show an increase in girls' verbal scores. Additionally, Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1982) found that noncustodial fathers are more likely to maintain support payments to sons rather than daughters, and Wallerstein and Corbin (1986) found that custodial fathers are less willing to finance education for their daughters than their sons.

In McLanahan's 1985 study, however, she found that negative effects on adolescents depends upon the type of single-parent family and the duration of absence (e.g., death, separation, divorce); the younger the child, the less negative the effects. Several studies found that the primary negative effects on children of divorce had to do with economic and social resources (Ambert & Saucier, 1984; McLanahan, 1985; Mueller & Pope, 1977). According to Garfinkel and McLanahan (1986), 51% of households headed by a single female are poor, and only 34% of families headed by widows are poor; they surmise that this discrepancy may be due to the difference between Survivors' Insurance (SI) and Aid to Females with Dependent Children (AFDC). Other studies reference the dramatic decreases in household resources as a result of marital disruption as one reason for the intergenerational transmission of poverty in female-headed households (Arendell, 1986; Bergmann, 1986; Sands & Nuccio, 1989; Selzer and Garfinkel, 1990; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993), as a result of the household's lack of a financial buffer against unstable employment and illness (Sherraden, 1991).

Keith and Finlay (1988), on the other hand, found that educational attainment was more directly related to the social status of the mother, as identified by her level of educational attainment. Keith and Finlay also found that males of mothers who had completed some college were more likely to exceed the mother's educational attainment by 2.8 years while females only surpassed their mother's level of education by 2.51 years. Smith (1981) also showed a strong relationship between academic achievement and mother's education, particularly when the mother had a four-year college degree.

Marini (1978; 1980; 1984) found that women with fewer years of schooling were more likely to marry at a younger age and that the younger the woman was at the time of

marriage the lower her educational attainment. An early first marriage is often associated with an early entry into parenthood, which also reduces the level of educational attainment for women (Marini, 1984; Waite & Moore, 1978). Also, one study found that adolescent girls in mother-only families were more likely to become pregnant because they became sexually active at an earlier age and because, presumably, their parents exercised less supervision (Hogan & Kitagawa, 1985).

The number of siblings in a family may also have an economic impact on children's education. Wedge and Prosser (1973) found that family size has a greater impact on the educational performance of working-class children than on middle-class children. For working-class children, they found the greater the family size, the more educationally "handicapped" they become. Heer (1985) found that several studies have linked inversely the number of offspring to measured intelligence. Blake (1989) and Parcel and Menaghan (1990) found lower verbal facility was related to family size; the larger the family, the less opportunity for parent-child interactions, and, thus, the lower the child's verbal facility. Timmer (n.d.) found that working mothers spend less time in child-related activities than non-working mothers, particularly on weekdays (Milne, Myers, & Rosenthal, 1986). Dodson (1999) found that daughters are often engaged in "family work" (e.g., housework, caring for siblings) that allows little time for extracurricular activities and, in some instances, for schooling.

3. Socioeconomic Status of the Family.

Research on the socioeconomic status of the family and its influence on children's education attainment is divided into five areas: the culture of economics, socioeconomic status and parental school involvement, social class and parent-child

communications about education, socioeconomic status and educational values, and parental expectations.

In addition to the family structure, the socioeconomic status of the family can directly impact children's physical, psychological, and intellectual readiness for education. For example, housing issues can impact children's ability to succeed in school; not having housing, or having inadequate housing, may affect the child's ability to get sufficient sleep or to have a sufficiently quiet place to do homework. Other economic factors that affect children's education are nutrition, access to adequate vision, medical and dental care; and sufficient clothing (Blaxter, 1981; Kozol, 1991; Townsend & Davidson, 1982; Wedge & Prosser, 1973).

Studies have found that the stress of economic hardship affects the parent-child interaction, and the lower the socioeconomic status of a child, the lower the perceived parental support, control, and consistency (Elder & Liker, 1982; Scheck & Emerick, 1976). For single-parent families that are headed by women, the "mother-absence" hypothesis states that lack of supervision is a critical indicator of children's academic achievement (Colletta, 1979; Fleisher, 1966; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1978). This position is controversial as some believe it seeks to blame mothers for the social structure of their families. The mother-absence hypothesis assumes that women who maintain families have lower incomes and have to work outside of the home, which means that they will supervise their children less, and, therefore, the children will have more behavioral problems. However, the emphasis must once again be made that the stress of economic hardship alone contributed more to the lower educational attainment of children from single-parent families than any other factor (Rainwater & Yancey, 1967). In fact,

Rainwater and Yancey surmise from their study that achievement in children from low-income families, specifically those from welfare dependent families, is undermined because of the welfare stigma, a stigma which they show has negative effects on self-esteem. Additionally, poor, female single-heads of households are more likely to experience frequent unemployment and more likely to live in unsafe neighborhoods where delinquency rates are higher and the quality of schools lower (Brandwein, Brown, & Fox, 1974).

Adolescents from low-income and working-class families are also more likely to work part- or full-time, be responsible for younger siblings, be more likely to have less time and energy for their studies (MacLennan, Pond, & Sullivan, 1982; Weiss, 1979), or leave school earlier (Colletta, 1979; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979; Weiss, 1979). Additionally, while studies have shown that there is little association with educational disadvantage among one-parent families (Essen, 1979; Sammons, Kysel, & Martimore, 1982), it is the economic adversities often sustained by one parent families which adversely affect educational attainment (Hinde, 1980; McLanahan, 1985; Raley, 1991). In addition, as discussed earlier, there is a higher rate of poverty among female-headed single parent families.

There is also evidence that socioeconomic status can impact the quality of education that students receive. Students from higher income families, who live in more affluent neighborhoods, are more likely to attend schools which have better funding and therefore better access to resources (Kozol, 1991). Putting aside issues about the quality of public and private school education, studies show that even when students of differing socioeconomic status are in the same classroom, they do not receive the same education,

and the expectations of teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors differ depending upon the social status of the student (Barker Lunn, 1970; Kozol, 1991; Pilling & Pringle, 1978; Rist, 1970; Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Finally, there is a body of research that suggests that poverty is intergenerational in nature, which also affects the educational and occupational choices and outcomes of children. Dahrendorf (1979) posits that children from poor households may internalize restricted options as a result of limited chances. Schiller (1989) says that poverty blocks economic and social advantages received by others because children from disadvantaged families do not have good schools, incomes, or jobs.

a. The Culture of Economics.

Kohn's classic study (1977) shows a link between occupational conditions and parental values. According to Kohn, white collar parents place more emphasis on self-direction and internalization of norms, while blue collar parents stress conformity to externally-imposed standards. The economics related to cultural factors can also have an impact on children's education. As discussed previously, several researchers have asserted that children from low socioeconomic groups are at a disadvantage.

Researchers such as Friedman (1967) go so far as to assert that children of working-class parents can be "linguistically deficient," depending upon child-rearing practices. Tough (1977), however, asserts that this does not mean to say that working-class children are somehow less intelligent, rather that they have not had the same encouragement, ability to practice linguistic skills, or access to "cultural capital" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Cultural capital is the resources available to persons for their use in education. Bourdieu (1977; 1988) refers to it as the process of persons using the benefits

of their social status. Cultural capital can be access to educational materials, to cultural events, or to early learning events. Persons of higher economic means usually have more access to cultural capital, and this may be one reason why persons in higher social classes have a higher level of educational success (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985). Persons of lower income have less money for expenditures such as private lessons, summer camps, educational toys and games, books, home computers, trips to museums and concerts, all of which are positively related to school achievement (Heyns, 1985).

While school systems expose children to some forms of cultural capital, there exists a gulf between the exposure to cultural capital of working-class children and middle class children. Exposure to the arts, music, literature, and objects of "high" culture and things which contribute to what Bourdieu (1977; 1984a) refers to as "presentation of self" (e.g., manners, decorum, vocabulary, fashion, and style) necessary for participation in the middle class are limited for working-class children. Grimes and Morris (1997) agreed with these findings and added that "[T]he opportunities for success afforded in late capitalist society [still] depend heavily on the relative resources that their families make available for their appropriation and that they will therefore acquire greater 'human capital skills'" (p. 192), and it is these skills which reproduce class structure intergenerationally.

The culture of social class can also affect students' ability to attain a post-secondary education. Certainly students' ability to afford a post-secondary education is a factor, as is affording application fees, and affording preparation courses for entrance tests (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Then there are the issues of linguistic deprivation and cultural literacy which may be affected by access to the cultural capital, as discussed earlier, which may

impact students' performance on these tests (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). In addition to the access to cultural capital afforded by social status, social status also refers to a particular set of values, values about education, careers, and family.

b. Socioeconomic Status and Parental School Involvement.

Even though parental involvement in children's education has been linked to school success, parental interaction with teachers and schools is different among social classes. Working-class parents do not feel they have a "voice" in their children's education while parents with higher socioeconomic status assert their right to be involved in the schools and tend to treat teachers as workers (Connell, 1982; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987). While 40-60% of working-class and lower-class parents fail to attend parent/teacher conferences, only 20-30% of middle-class parents do not attend (Lightfoot, 1978; McPherson, 1972; Ogbu, 1974; Van Galen, 1987). Several sources report that middle-class parents are also more active in promoting language development via reading to their children, bringing them to the library and to other school events, and encouraging their children to attend summer school (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Heath, 1983; Heyns, 1978; Medrich, et al., 1980; Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Wilcox, 1978). Additionally, middle-class mothers are also more likely to push their children to achieve and to push their children's academic advantages (Brantlinger, Massoumeth, & Guskin, 1996). However, at least one study (Lareau, 1989) did not find a correlation between parents' values about education or educational aspirations for their children and their involvement in their children's school.

Across social classes, involvement in children's education was seen as mother's work (Lareau, 1989). Mothers are more involved when they have younger children, and

more involved when their child is male (Epstein, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 1987; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). In fact, several studies show that the mother's level of education may be the best predictor of the children's level of education. As discussed earlier in this paper, the mother's socioeconomic status also has a significant impact on the child's education. However, in at least one study, the mothers' participation in the labor force does not influence participation in their children's education (Lareau, 1989).

c. Social Class and Parent-Child Communications About Education.

Communications between parents and their children about post-secondary education differ between social classes. Luttrell, in her 1997 study of low-income women, found that in their stories about education, study participants almost always mentioned the effect of the messages of their mothers in relationship to school. Fathers were rarely mentioned in relation to stories about school, except in instances where fathers encouraged or discouraged their daughters' attendance. Luttrell found that mothers' relationships to school in these stories took one of three forms: the *uninvolveds*, the *school back-ups*, or the *school antagonists*. The *uninvolved* mothers did not have either the time or education to be involved in their daughters' educations. The *back-ups* viewed school as the authority and complied with the school's demands or requirements (e.g., punishment; supervising homework, attending meetings, attaining necessary supplies). The *antagonists* challenged schools and supported their daughters in spite of school demands or requirements.

In Brantlinger's 1993 study, "all high-income respondents recalled conversations about college with their parents" (p. 178). These adolescents did not recall that not going to college was an option. They also felt that they were expected to attend and that they were expected to get advanced degrees (Brantlinger, 1993). Low-income adolescents

often had not discussed college with their parents, did not feel as though they were encouraged, and, if they did have conversations with their parents about education, were told that the parents could not afford to send them to college. Tizard, Mortimore, and Burchell (1981) do not attribute low-income parents' lack of response to lack of interest; rather, they attribute it to lack of self-confidence and insufficient knowledge.

The communications between adolescents and their parents can have a significant impact on college attendance. Cashmore and Goodnow (1985) found that the best predictor of educational attainment for adolescents is their understanding of their own parents' views on education. Communication of parental values can include verbal statements, messages derived from parents' actions, and the support behaviors exhibited by the parents. Smith (1991) found that frequent mentioning of educational goals by parents resulted in a loss of effectiveness, particularly when the mother has a college degree and the father has a high status occupation; such repetition is viewed almost as nagging.

Also, Olneck and Bills (1980) found that social class and the educational attainment of parents affected persistence in school. McLanahan (1985) and Shaw (1982) found that higher and lower parental income had a strong impact on high school retention rates for children from single-parent and two-parent homes; high school students from families with higher incomes were more likely to remain in school. Conklin and Daily (1981) reported that when parents have attended college, they are more likely to assume that their children will also attend college. Hoelter and Harper (1987) found that when attending college is assumed, students are more likely to go.

d. Socioeconomic Status and Educational Values.

Studies on working class families reveal specific values about education, careers, and family. The "Wisconsin Model" found that socioeconomic status influences parents' values about education which, in turn, influences children's educational aspirations, goals, and motivations (Sewell, Hauser, & Wolf, 1980). Kohn and Schooler (1983) and Kohn (1969) establish that during the process of socialization, parents impart to their children the values and behaviors for which they were rewarded. For example, Kohn and Schooler (1983) report that working-class fathers place more value on getting good grades in school and conformity to external standards than do middle-class fathers. Gecas (1979) found that success in acquiring higher education was also linked to these values. Interestingly, one study of sociologists from working-class backgrounds addresses this issue from the adult child's point of view (Grimes and Morris, 1997). Within their study, Grimes and Morris found that these scholars believed themselves to be disadvantaged, and, in order to fit in, they had to undergo a form of unlearning of inappropriate behaviors from their working-class backgrounds.

e. Parental Expectations.

In addition to the influence of socioeconomic status of the parents on children's educational attainment, several studies show evidence of a relationship between parents' aspirations for their children's educational attainment and their children's own educational aspirations (Crandall, 1963; Hess, 1984; Hossler & Stage, 1992; Seginer, 1983). Smith's (1981) study provided evidence linking parental educational expectations and the expectations of their children. He found that both maternal and paternal goals had a positive effect on their adolescents. Additionally, Troll and

Bengtson (1979) found positive associations between perceived and actual parental goals and students' educational goals, and Smith (1981; 1982; 1991) found a "considerably stronger" (1991, p. 162) relationship between perceived maternal goals and students' educational goals, which agrees with previous findings (Acock & Bengtson, 1978).

Brantlinger (1993) found that adolescents from high-income families placed a high degree of importance on and trust in their parents' wishes for their futures, while adolescents from low-income families were less likely to hold their parents' wishes in high esteem. Brantlinger posits that low-income adolescents' low regard for parental wishes may be because of the parents' low-income and low-status jobs, or perhaps because the parent was usually female.

Despite equally high educational aspirations and expectations between low-income and high-income adolescents, school drop out rates are substantially higher for low-income adolescents (Toles, Schulz, & Rice, 1986). Low-income students have high, but unrealistic expectations about college. For low-income adolescents in Brantlinger's (1993) study, college was perceived as "vocationally advantageous." Several studies have found that low-income parents have a wider range of education aspirations and a wider range of acceptable occupations for their children (Frieze & Snyder, 1980; Gottfredson, 1981; Rodman & Voydanoff, 1978). Considerable research has focused on the link between parents' values about education and children's achievement behavior (Cockburn, 1989; St. John, 1972). Parents from all social classes hold similar perceptions of ideal educational goals (Laosa, 1982), but expectations decrease as the amount of parental schooling decreases (Seginer, 1983).

Several studies support the notion that parents have differing attitudes toward achievement goals, depending upon the gender of their offspring. Differences can include socialization practices and sex-stereotyping (Eccles, 1993; Huston, 1983; Wentzel, 1998). Gender specific socialization practices appear to be consistent across social classes. One practice, no matter what social class, is that most females must resolve the competing ideologies of what is appropriate behavior for females (being feminine) and what is the appropriate means of achieving self-esteem (competition) in the United States (Anyon, 1982). Competition, which is considered unfeminine, is incompatible with the means by which one advances through one's education and career.

Another practice is sex-stereotyping, which, regardless of social class, occurs early in women's education and helps to direct them toward lower-prestige, lower-paying occupations (Gittell, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1986; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Walker & Mehr, 1992). In addition, according to Borman, Meuninghoff, and Piazza (1988) many working-class women are at a disadvantage in attaining certain types of careers because they lack requisite skills that seem to be more available to middle class women. Skills such as negotiating, supervising, and mentoring seem to be intergenerationally transmitted. This may also have to do with the issue access to human capital skills, cultural capital, and sex-stereotyping mentioned earlier.

Finally, "the marriage plot" is common within all social classes and it assumes that females will marry and further assumes that women cannot do well at both career and family and, therefore, have to choose between the two (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). Coincidentally, in Kamarovsky's (1987) study of blue collar workers, less educated husbands tended to have more dependent wives. The presumption here is that women who

chose marriage over their education were financially dependent upon their husbands, and, therefore, did not have the confidence or self-esteem to be psychologically independent from their husbands. One has to wonder whether the lack of confidence as a result of financial dependence also occurs across social classes.

An effect related to the marriage plot is the "ideology of romance" (McRobbie, 1978) or "culture of romance" (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990), which occurs with young women, where their education and careers become focused on acquiring an appropriate spouse. Despite advances in women's thinking, some women are still socialized that higher education is a means to land a husband (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990), and that women's own careers and education should be secondary to family (Arnold, 1995). This focus results in their second-class status in the home and in the workplace.

4. The Influence of Mothers on Daughters' Educational Attainment and Occupational Choice

a. Mother's Level of Education.

Smith (1989) found that maternal influence on education was significantly higher than paternal influence and that paternal influence depended largely upon the economic assets available for formal education. Other studies linked mother-daughter sex-role agreement and the level of parental formal education (Smith & Self, 1980) while Spillers and Katz (1989) found that the mother's educational status, but not her occupation, correlated with the daughter's commitment to a career. As mentioned earlier, the mother's level of education has a significant impact on offspring's educational and occupational attainment. Mothers with college experience who divorced had daughters who married at later ages (Keith & Finlay, 1988). Also

mentioned earlier, daughters of divorced mothers who had lower educational attainment were less likely to exceed their mother's education (Keith & Finlay, 1988). In addition to mothers' levels of education, maternal employment and gender-role attitudes have significant effects on their daughters.

b. Mother's Occupation.

Findings and interpretations of maternal employment effects are contradictory, possibly because there are too many variables such as mother's attitude toward her work, quality/presence of day care, mother's level of education, number of siblings, type of employment, etc. Hoffman (1980) and Heyns (1985) reviewed the literature and arrived at two different conclusions. Hoffman concluded that mother's employment was positive for lower-class children but had negative effects for middle-class boys. Heyns concluded that there is very little difference between achievement of kids with working mothers v. non-working mothers. Mercy and Steelman (1982) found that mother's employment has direct negative effects on IQ, but indirect effects when mediated through the variable of family size. Cramer (1980) found that maternal employment is likely to have a substantial impact on family size; and, as discussed earlier, the size of the family can impact the children's educational attainment.

Several studies show that mothers' employment status affects daughters' occupational choices (Almquist & Angrist, 1970; Baruch, 1974; Hoffman, 1974a) and that daughters' occupational mobility was significantly influenced by whether their mothers worked outside of the home and what kind of occupation the mother held (Rosenfield, 1978). In fact, in Rosenfeld's study, if the mother was employed when her daughter was fifteen, the mother's occupational status had more significant influence

than the father's. Macke and Morgan (1978) found that maternal employment may produce a "modeling effect" having positive effects on the career expectations and aspirations of high school girls. Kamarovsky (1985) concluded that whether or not the mother was employed did not affect the daughter's career aspirations; rather it was mother's satisfaction with her role that affected the daughter's career commitment. Milne et. al. (1986) found that the mother's employment has a negative effect on achievement for students from two-parent families; the more mom worked, the more the effect. The effects are more significant for high school students than elementary students. Also, working mothers helped less with homework and attended fewer parent-teacher conferences. Kids of working mothers spend less time on homework and reading and more time watching television, with full-time working mothers spending more time watching television.

c. Mother and Daughter Gender Role Attitudes.

Several studies show that employed mothers hold less traditional gender-role attitudes than mothers who do not work outside of the home (Ransford & Miller, 1983; Tallichet & Willits, 1986; Thornton & Freedman, 1979; Thornton, Alwin, & Camburn, 1983) as do more educated and employed mothers (Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardiff, 1995; Spitze, 1988). As such, children from mother-headed families have less traditional attitudes toward gender roles (Demo & Acock, 1988; Powell & Steelman, 1982; Tomeh, 1980; Vogel, et al., 1970), have more egalitarian and less stereotyped attitudes than do children of unemployed mothers (Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989; Lamb, 1982; Lips, 1989), and daughters of employed and more educated mothers hold less traditional gender role attitudes (Booth & Amato, 1994; Corder & Stephan, 1984; Herzog &

Bachman, 1982; Zuckerman, 1981), and are more likely to choose non-traditional occupations (Crawford, 1978). Green (1978) found that daughters of lesbian couples chose more prestigious and masculine careers. Tangri (1972) also found that achievement and career choices of daughters were impacted by the "innovativeness" of the mother's occupation. Another study (Ex & Janssens, 1998) found that the mother's education level was related to her child-rearing style and gender role attitude; the higher the mother's level of education, the less traditional her daughter's attitudes about motherhood. Two studies suggest that maternal employment should have its strongest effects on teenagers during the years that they are formulating their career goals (Kiecolt & Acock, 1988; Ransford & Miller, 1983). Powell and Steelman (1982), however, argue that the "primacy" effect should more greatly influence their gender-role attitudes prior to age six; other studies have found that maternal attitudes and beliefs about occupations have a direct effect on the occupational interests of their daughters (Barling, Kelloway, & Bremmerman, 1991; Barling & Steele, 1996), while another study found that parental influence on gender-role attitudes decreases with age (Glass, Bengtson, & Dunham, 1986).

Several studies cite the impact that mothers have on the educational aspirations and achievements of their daughters. Kiecolt and Acock (1988) and Thornton and Freedman (1979) found that the mother's level of education had more influence on daughters than maternal employment. Other researchers also found that the educational accomplishments of mothers were the most significant determinant of their daughters' level of education (Bourque & Cosand, 1989; Marini, 1978; Wilson & Portes, 1975).

Parcel and Menaghan (1990) found that the more complex the mother's occupation, the greater the child's verbal facility.

d. Mothers As Role Models.

Studies show that daughters look up to their mothers as role models (Fischer, 1986; Kahn, 1980; Rubin, 1976) or are more likely to choose their mother rather than their father as the role model for their behavior (Bourque & Cosand, 1989). In Fischer's study, daughters with differing educational levels viewed their mothers as role models, with daughters with a college education slightly more likely to view their fathers as role models. The daughters' perceptions of their mothers' achievements and aspirations influenced their own educational achievement; data also showed that daughters' first discussions about education occurred with their mothers 51% of the time (Bourque & Cosand, 1989).

Studies such as Dambrot and Vassel's 1983 study of women lawyers and several studies from the 1970's (Douvan, 1976; Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974b; Hoffman, 1979; Stein & Bailey, 1973) found that daughters of employed women were more likely to choose their mothers as role models. In Dambrot and Vassel's study, they found that 54% selected their professional mothers as role models; 43% selected employed, non-professional mothers; and 22% selected mothers who were homemakers. Santrock (1972) found that parental behavior on children is thought to be strongest for father-son and mother-daughter pairs. Several studies from the 1970's about mothers as role models interpreted their results to mean that mothers modeled for their daughters ways to be or not to be (e.g., ways of being feminine, having a career and balancing career and family) (Almquist & Angrist, 1971; Berens, 1972; Veres, 1974). Baruch (1972)

concluded that young women identify with their mothers' attitudes and competence toward dual role patterns; young women who identify with their mothers' successful integration of career and home roles referred to it as "identification model." Hill and Duncan (1987) offer that "parental income affects the cognitive and emotional development of children in that it reflects the examples, or role models, parents provide for their children" (p. 48).

Hill and Duncan also believe that the mother's occupational attainments may provide a positive role model. Smith (1989) found "the effects of maternal education upon expectations, aspirations, and grades are in accord with the result that would be expected if the child used the mother as an educational role model" (1987, p. 94) and, in a later study, postulates that the mother's own educational achievement provides a strong role model for higher education (Smith, 1991). In the same vein, Woelfel and Haller (1971) propose that parents offer themselves as an example, while Sennett and Cobb (1972) propose that working-class fathers offer themselves as examples of life courses that their children should not follow.

e. Mothers As Mentors.

As mentioned earlier, several studies report the need for and importance of mentoring for young women. Mentors for women students may help more women to navigate the educational system, to advance, and to keep them from dropping out of school.

Several studies on professionally and academically successful women discuss the importance of mentors in their lives (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Arnold, 1995; Chase, 1995; Grimes & Morris, 1997; Walker & Mehr, 1992). These same women

also mention the impact that their mothers' messages have had on their professional and educational lives. Also, several studies about women of different social classes contain quotes about the impact their mothers have had on their lives (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Fischer, 1986; Kamarovsky, 1987). Their mother's messages were sometimes overt, "You need to be able to take care of yourself;" or covert, "Boys don't make passes at women who wear glasses" (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). At least one study found that mother's words were the most influential factor in their married daughters' choice of roles (Sholomaskas & Axelrod, 1986). There is also a large body of research evidencing the special link between mothers and daughters over their life course. [For reviews, see Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983; Boyd, 1989; Fischer, 1986; Hagestad, 1981; Walker & Thompson, 1983.] Whether overt or covert, these messages left lasting impressions on their daughters that were remembered years later. In this respect, the mothers became the daughters' first mentors. For most women, their first mentor and educational role model is their own mother.

D. Conclusion

Since it has been shown that the mother's level of education is the best predictor of the children's level of educational attainment, and mothers are usually more involved in the children's education than fathers, then it stands to reason that mothers are most likely the most influential mentors and role models in their children's education. As the children's first educational mentor and role model, then it also stands to reason that the communications that occur between mother and child about education are influential. When this line of reasoning is considered with the research which shows that mentors are important for low-income and working-class adolescent females, the impact of the

communications that occur with their first mentor, their mother, becomes staggeringly important.

There is little research on mothers as mentors, but there is research on mothers as role models (Handel, 1991; Sholomaskas & Axelrod, 1986; Spillers & Katz, 1989). While the terms may seem close in nature, there is a fundamental distinction: mentors provide information and guidance through verbal directions while role models provide guidance only through their actions.

There has been no research conducted on the communications that occur between mothers and their daughters about education, even though women have noted the influence of these communications within several studies on women and education and on professional women, as mentioned earlier. If these communications are the first contacts that females have with their role model- and mentor-mothers, what are the mothers saying to their daughters? What do these communications consist of? What impact do these communications have on the daughters?

In Chapter III, I will discuss a feminist research perspective and its impact on this research. Additionally, I will discuss the issues that arise when interviewing women and adolescents, the research participants, and the methods used to conduct and analyze this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

> I have seen some of my women graduate students struggle inchoately to formulate a problem given to them by prehension, rather than derived from an existing puzzle in the discipline. They turn to "received knowledge" and find little of relevance. They explore the topic with professors who, albeit gentle and sympathetic, cannot help but subtly rephrase the problematic into something they can see. The language the women need is not yet part of the discourse; it is their job to invent it (Abu-Lughod, 1981, p. 15, cited in DeVault, 1999, p. 203).

A. Introduction

Both the challenge and the goal of this research was to identify the spoken and unspoken communications that occurred between mothers and daughters about education. No known research had been conducted on the communications that occur between working-class mothers and daughters about education and careers. As a result, a research design was developed to identify a specific population of participants and the research methodology was used to allow them to share their thoughts and ideas about education, thus bringing to light their overt and covert beliefs. Toward this end, a combination of methodologies was employed from a feminist research perspective with an awareness of the issues encountered when interviewing adolescents and women, in particular working-class women. This study was then able to organize and articulate what has never before been articulated.

In this chapter, I discuss my position as a feminist researcher and the impact it had on this research. I then discuss the process by which participants were recruited and selected and then introduce the participants themselves, answering the question of "why" this specific population. Third, I briefly discuss the two pilot studies that were conducted and how they informed the design of the research methods for this study. I then discuss

the methodological and analytical strategies used to identify the covert and overt communications between mothers and daughters about education and careers. Lastly, I discuss the literature related to the special issues that may arise when interviewing women and adolescents and the limitations of this study.

B. Feminist Research

This qualitative study was conducted from a feminist research perspective in that it articulated an area of women's lives that has never before been articulated. It also looked at the social factors affecting the participants' working-class status and the mothers' status as sole supporters of families. This study was also designed to achieve, as much as possible, equity between the researcher and the participants.

1. A Feminist Research Perspective.

A feminist research perspective commences from the tenet of helping to articulate in women's lives what has not yet been articulated (DeVault, 1999; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991), and, by doing so, it validates women's experiences (Gluck, 1977/1996). A feminist research perspective also begins from the point of view that knowledge always starts from a social perspective, both the researcher's and the participants' (Messing, 1986). As Driscoll and McFarland (1989) state, "Feminist research methodology is oriented toward contextualizing the research process, the researcher, and the subject of research, based on a nondualistic world view" (p. 189). Since feminist research begins from a social perspective, feminist researchers acknowledge that there may not be absolute solutions to the subjects being studied. In fact, Spender (1985) identified the core of feminist research as that "there is no one truth, no one authority, no one

objective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge" (cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 7).

While there are as many different versions of feminist theory as there are views about a feminist research perspective, there are some characteristics common to feminist research, regardless of the methodology used. Research from a feminist perspective should be transdisciplinary, it should seek social change, and it should seek to represent human diversity (Reinharz, 1993). As discussed above, researchers should also be conscious of their own positioning in their research, they should strive for equity, and they should seek to develop trust in their research relationships.

One role of a feminist researcher is to "give voice" to silenced groups. Giving voice is often done in two ways: 1.) feminist research often seeks to “rename” (Spender, 1985) the experiences of the oppressed by using their own words, and 2.) feminist research helps the oppressed to facilitate their own discoveries of their oppression (Kasper, 1986). By helping oppressed groups to name and to facilitate their own discoveries of oppression, a feminist researcher is conducting transformative research (DeVault, 1999). Transformative research often occurs simply by giving participants the opportunity to articulate what they have never before articulated, which draws it to the participants' attention. While feminist researchers cannot speak for others, they can speak out for others. In addition, how feminist researchers present the participants' words and findings can also draw the attention of others to these newly articulated realities.

While feminist researchers historically only advocated qualitative research methods (Reinharz, 1979), contemporary feminist researchers advocate that either quantitative or qualitative research methods can be used (DeVault, 1999; Jayaratne &

Stewart, 1991; Kasper, 1994), depending upon the particular needs of the study. However, qualitative methods, interviewing in particular, allow the participants' voices to be heard in a way that quantitative research simply cannot provide as participants' stories provide a context for the texts, the data, which are generated (McCracken, 1988; Messing, 1986).

Contemporary feminist researchers also acknowledge that feminist research does not have to be done only by women on women (DeVault, 1999; Gluck, 1977/1996). However, several feminist researchers state that women researchers are able to develop a level of trust with women interviewees that mixed gender interviews are not (Oakley, 1981; Reinharz, 1983). In fact, Spender (1985) goes so far as to say that women, like other subordinate groups, are skilled listeners, and women interviewers are able to participate in interviews with women in a way that men are not. Gender aside, Gluck (1977/1996) posits that "cultural likeness can greatly promote trust and openness, whereas dissimilarity reinforces cultural and social distance" (p. 221). Feminists would argue that gender could be considered a cultural difference. Gluck further posits that interviewers outside of the social class or culture can prepare for these interviews by studying the attitudes, vocabulary, and body language of the group or subgroup to be interviewed. On the other hand, as stated earlier, some researchers advocate that only women should interview women, and it follows that only interviewers of similar culture to the interviewees should conduct the interviews (Gluck, 1977/1996).

2. Feminism and Researcher/Participant Equity.

A feminist researcher strives for equity between the researcher and the participants (Driscoll & McFarland, 1989; Reinharz, 1992; Reinharz, 1993). I strove for equity in this research by acknowledging my own positioning in this study, as will be discussed later in

this chapter, and by respecting the participants' contributions to this research in several ways. First, I purposely used the word "participant" instead of "subject" because the women actively participated in this study via their contributions of information. Another way a researcher strives for equality in the researcher/participant relationship is how the researcher presents the voice of the participants. Every effort was made to be sensitive to the participants so as not to betray their trust. Finally, to ensure accuracy and sensitivity in portraying participants, participants were invited to review their transcripts and the drafted dissertation, which is known as member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); however, none accepted the invitations.

3. Researcher Autobiographical Information.

In feminist research, the researcher's own participation and experience should be consciously used as part of the research process (Driscoll & McFarland, 1989); therefore, feminist research frequently includes discussion of the researcher as a person (Reinharz, 1993). Gluck writes, "Since we are asking a stranger to be self-revealing, we in turn, must be willing to divulge information about ourselves" (1977/1996, p. 222-3). Researchers need to be aware of their own positioning—social class, race, nationality, sexuality, educational level, etc.--as it influences the interpretation of participants' voices. Acknowledging my own positioning was done via an educational autobiography. Acknowledging my own positioning left me feeling vulnerable, but it was a worthwhile process which heightened my respect for the information and time entrusted to me by the participants.

Briefly, my own positioning in this research is that of a white, married woman from a working-class background, but with a middle-class level of education and career,

who was raised in the same geographical location as the participants in this study, and attended one of the high schools from which participants were drawn. When I began this research, I was childless and by the end of the interviews nine months pregnant. The latter fact elicited comments and questions from the mothers that would not have occurred had I not been pregnant (e.g., "how long will you take off work?," "will you stay home with the baby?," "you'll be sorry" (for having a child)) and mixed feelings on my part as I interviewed young women about their educational and occupational futures. The information shared by the mothers with regard to their concerns and attempts to raise intelligent, educated, and successful women took on new meaning as I pondered how to do the same with my own daughter.

The current term for someone straddling economic and educational levels is "tweeny," referring to someone who is in between, but not quite in either social class. Reviewing the messages relayed to me by my own mother and grandmother allowed me to decipher my own educational and economic biases. For example, I approached this research with the bias that education is of value and that education can make a difference in one's economic self-sufficiency. In analyzing the texts from this study, every effort was made to keep my personal biases,

4. Feminism and The Researcher/Participant Relationship.

Developing trust is an important issue for feminist researchers, particularly in interview-based research. Developing trust with participants can help researchers access accurate and appropriate information. A crucial step toward developing trust is through open communication between interviewer and participants (Gluck, 1977/1996). Gluck advocates being "open about both the purpose of the interview and the use of the

material" (p. 222). Striving for equity can be part of the process of developing trust as researchers have found that interviews in which the researcher strove for a non-hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participants yielded more information in greater depth (Laslett & Rapoport, 1975; Oakley, 1981; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). Another way to develop trust is by allowing participant feedback during the research process, which is often found in feminist research (Driscoll & McFarland, 1989), and which was accomplished in this study via member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trust was also developed by having participants choose their own pseudonyms.

One of the more controversial aspects of feminist research is that it often attempts to develop special relationships with the people studied through such methods as used in interactive research (Reinharz, 1993). These special relations are controversial because, in order to redefine or reinterpret the phenomena, the researcher must develop a rapport with the research participants, which invites a degree of openness. The notion of rapport stems from the ideology that women's "ethics of care" defines how they experience relationships (Gilligan, 1982). Arguments which support establishing a bond with the participants claim that the researcher is more likely to have a level of respect for the participants and is less likely to exploit the participants (Oakley, 1981). Arguments against establishing a bond or "special relationship" can impose excessive demands on a feminist researcher (Reinharz, 1993). Issues of trust will be discussed further later in this chapter in the section about special issues that may arise when interviewing women and adolescents.

In this study, I did not take an essentialist view of feminist research, that feminist research can only be qualitative research conducted by women and about women.

Instead, the research process was designed to use what appeared to be the most appropriate methods for the study. The question asked, the participants, and the issues investigated determined the appropriate methodology and methods for the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980; Patton, 1990). Harding (1987) reminds us that "methods" are specific procedures used during the course of research; in this study the most appropriate methods, as I discuss in detail later in this chapter, are semi-structured, in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. Applied to these methods, I bring a feminist perspective on methodology; methodology, as Harding (1987) reminds us, is the thinking that drives the method.

For a more complete summary of feminist research perspectives, see also DeVault, 1999; Harding, 1987; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Kasper, 1994; and, Oakley, 1998.

C. Research Issues

Before proceeding, it is necessary to first address some issues that arise specific to interviewing women and adolescents that affected this research.

1. Interviewing Women.

Researchers have identified certain issues that arise when doing interview based research with women. Those issues fall into three major categories: issues of language or expression, issues of interrelationship, and issues of trust.

a. Language Issues.

Language issues that arise when interviewing women have to do with expression, either difficulty expressing or different ways of expressing their experience. Spender (1985) and other feminist gender linguists (Daly, 1973; Rich, 1976) begin their research

from perspective that language is a male creation, that males have named and classified the world (Daly, 1973), and that women have not been allowed to participate in the formation of that language; therefore, the language does not adequately represent women's knowledge or experiences. Researchers report that women, particularly less educated, working-class women, often struggle to find words to articulate their experiences (DeVault, 1999; Gluck, 1977/1996) as these women may not be accustomed to reflecting on themselves, or they may not feel their lives or stories are important (Gluck, 1977/1996). For these reasons, when interviews are translated, important information may be lost (Gluck, 1977/1996) by not capturing non-verbal responses, stops and starts, hesitations, or silences. Therefore, field notes were taken to record any posturing or gesturing that more effectively communicated, added to, or contradicted what the women were trying to articulate.

DeVault (1999) and Gluck (1977/1996) both suggest that it is the researcher's role to listen for attempts to articulate or to translate experience into more suitable language and to analyze these "disjunctures." DeVault (1986; 1999) suggests listening for hesitant or halting forms of speech as it can reflect a woman's struggle to find new forms of expression. Hesitations and stops and starts may be indicative of finding new ways to express and translate their feelings (DeVault, 1990). Kvale (1996), on the other hand, says that "though the linear talk of women can be captured by questionnaires, the way women want to make connections among areas of their lives is better approached through qualitative, in-depth interviews" (p. 73).

b. Relational Issues.

Relational issues that arise when interviewing women have to do with how women interviewers relate to women interviewees, issues of trust and rapport, and what some researchers refer to as "placing." Oakley (1981) found that establishing a relationship with the interviewees is a key step in developing trust and rapport. She found that while interviewing women, they asked her many questions; out of respect for the participants, she would answer them and, thereby, she developed a rapport and a level of trust. Refusing to answer their questions may have jeopardized her relationship with them. In this study, however, the women appeared to be reluctant to ask me questions. At the end of each series of interviews, I thanked participants for sharing their stories with me and offered to answer any questions they may have for me, either personally or professionally. Most questions were about the study (e.g., how long to complete, how long had I been working on it), but rarely did the mothers ask me personal questions. I also noted, as Hobson (1978) had, that the informal talk after interviews often related to what was said during interviews.

As mentioned earlier, one of the issues in feminist research is that of forming special relationships with the participants. Finch found that the statement, "I've really enjoyed having someone to talk to" (p. 74) was a common response at the end of her interviews with women. Finch reports that in her two studies that women "seemed to lack opportunities to engage collectively with other women in ways which they would find supportive, and therefore they welcomed the opportunity to try to make sense of some of the contradictions in their lives in the presence of a sympathetic listener" (p. 75).

Occasionally the women in Finch's interviews stated that they had never thought about these things, with one woman saying she enjoyed talking to someone.

While "a feminist interviewing women is by definition both 'inside' the culture and participating in that which she is observing" (Oakley, 1981, p. 57), if a feminist perspective is to develop rapport with female participants, then the researcher by virtue of her involvement is a participant in the research. Many feminist researchers have commented on the ease with which women interviewees have opened up to women researchers conducting in-depth interviews (DeVault, 1990; Finch, 1984; Oakley, 1981; Stacey, 1988).

Cotterill (1992) found that poor, single mothers, despite their willingness to participate, often required persistence to get them to complete interviews. She notes that one option would be to curtail the interviews or to eliminate these women from her interviews; however, as a feminist researcher she felt compelled to include these women who would not otherwise be included in such studies. In this study, similar difficulties were encountered, particularly with initial interviews when some participants skipped meetings, despite my traveling to their homes, nor did they return my follow-up phone calls.

c. Trust Issues.

Developing trust with interviewees has both positive and negative consequences. Developing a level of trust can help avoid situations as referred to by Edwards (1990) in which interviewees lied to interviewers and told them what they thought they wanted to hear. Edwards posits that lack of equity in the research may objectify the participants, and their response is to not trust the researcher and to not provide truthful responses. Trust also

becomes an issue when interviewees reveal too much, open up their lives too completely, trust the interviewer too openly and, therefore, open themselves to "exploitative potential" (Finch, 1984). The very techniques that make qualitative research effective can elicit information that ultimately could be used against the interviewees. It is up to a feminist researcher to protect the research participants; therefore, in this study, the participants were protected via a consent form, use of a pseudonym, the elimination of specific identifying information from this study, and the respect and care with which their voices are portrayed.

Feminist researchers also refer to being "placed" (Finch, 1984; Hobson, 1978; Oakley, 1981) or establishing areas of shared experience or categorical memberships (Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984) as a rite of passage when interviewing women. "Placing" refers to interviewees establishing the interviewer's "place" in their social context (e.g., marital status, family status, occupational status) as a way of establishing personal identification with the interviewer. "Placing" is an important part of the interviewee's determination of the level of trust she affords to the interviewer.

Part of "placing" is relating to the interviewer's gender. Several researchers report that women interviewing women have a distinct advantage over mixed gender interviewing (Finch, 1984; Oakley, 1981; Spender, 1985). Finch relates "gender specific" (p. 78) identification of women interviewees with women interviewers. She notes that during her studies women interviewees developed a high level of trust in her and expected that she would understand their confidings simply because she was a woman. Spender (1985) argues that women talk differently to other women because women speakers feel they are more likely to be listened to and taken seriously by another women. Spender also believes that women to women interviews provide the opportunity for women to speak

more fully about their experiences, for women to "break the silence of their experiences" (p. 58), and for women to begin labeling and constructing their own reality.

In these interviews, "placing" began with whether I had children and once it was obvious I was pregnant, whether this was my first child and whether I knew its gender. Once they determined it was my first child, most felt free to give me childrearing advice. It is interesting to note that while most participants were interested in my status as a mother, most did not ask my marital status.

2. Interviewing Adolescents.

There is little research related to interviewing adolescents. Much of the research related to interviewing adolescents has been extended from interviewing children and centers around communication issues. However, there are some general guidelines that apply to interviewing in general, regardless of the participant's gender or age. These common guidelines are establishing rapport and gaining confidence via casual dress and conversation; reinforcing that there are no right or wrong answers, only their answers; showing genuine interest in what they have to say; and explaining the use of the tape recorder without making an issue of it (Bell, 1981), all of which were employed in this study.

a. Communication Issues.

Bell and Osborne (1981) identified several communication issues that arise when interviewing children. For example, when a child gives an unanticipated response, the interviewer should give herself time by repeating back the response to the child in order to verify, clarify, reflect, and formulate another question. Interviewing children requires patience and must include wait time; however, if the child takes too long to answer a

question, the interviewer should ask the child a probing question in order to stimulate a response. For a child, "I don't know" often means that they do not know the answer the interviewer wants. In response to an "I don't know," it is best to repeat the question and emphasize that it is their response that the interviewer is looking for. Bell and Osborne (1981) also caution that if a child loses confidence, becomes monosyllabic, and the silences after questions continue to be too long, it is best to abort the interview. Parker (1984) reminds us of the power imbalance between adult and child, and that children are highly suggestible and are easily biased by the way questions are phrased.

In this study, only one daughter failed to respond openly during an interview at which time it was clear she was tired and had enough. A couple of other daughters appeared hesitant to speak negatively about their mothers, and, if they thought a particular answer would reflect negatively on their mother, they would hesitate or not respond at all. Despite my reassurances that there were no right or wrong answers, only facts, some continued to speak cautiously.

b. Age Issues.

Between the ages of twelve and fourteen, peer identity develops and adolescents have a tendency to withhold information from adults (Parker, 1984). The fourteen to sixteen year-old, on the other hand, wants to interact with the researcher as an equal. This middle adolescent may have a degree of idealism about the research project which may motivate them to cooperate, or they may have a heightened concern for their own development which may result in withdrawing from or acting hostile toward the interviewer (Parker, 1984).

An interesting note from this study is that the teens were more likely than the mothers to question my circuitous question posing. Some daughters were outwardly annoyed at having been asked the same, or a similar, question before. When I explained that asking the same question another way sometimes elicits a different response, they seemed to find it a satisfactory explanation. "I knew there had to be a good reason," one daughter responded.

c. Parental Access Issues.

Another relevant issue Parker (1984) mentions has to do with parents' assumed access to the interview material. In order to interview a minor, researchers need permission from the minor's parent or guardian. According to Parker, some parents may feel that they have the right to access the otherwise confidential material because it is their child, and they have given permission for the child to be interviewed. In this study, the consent form included a statement informing the parents that by giving permission for their child to be interviewed, they were not guaranteed access to the interview material. Access would be provided only if permission was given by the adolescents; and given freely, not in the presence of the parent. The precautions to preserve the confidentiality of the adolescents' interviews were for two reasons: to give the adolescents the opportunity to speak freely during the interview without the presence of the parent; and, to allow the adolescents not to feel coerced into giving parental permission to access their interviews. While this care and caution may initially seem contrary to a feminist perspective of openness and access to research materials, it was intended to protect, as much as is possible, the adolescent from the inherent power imbalance of the parent-child

relationship. In this study, none of the mothers questioned the lack of access to their daughters' interviews, nor did they request access to their daughters' transcripts.

D. The Participants

1. Participant Selection.

After the University's Human Subjects Review Committee approved my proposal for research using human participants, permission was then obtained from the principal, the superintendent, and the school committee of a rural Massachusetts high school to have homeroom teachers distribute surveys about the research study to 9th and 10th grade girls (Appendices B, C, and D). Homeroom instructors were provided with an instruction sheet (Appendix E) with the survey research packets to be handed out to their one hundred and ten female students. The packets consisted of a cover letter to the female students (Appendix F), a cover letter to their mothers (Appendix G), a voluntary consent form (Appendix H), and a the survey (Appendix I), all of which were to be taken home with them to be discussed with their mothers. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was included for the return of the questionnaire and the consent form. The questionnaire was designed to identify participants who met the criteria for participation in the study. Criteria for participation included both mother and daughter consenting to participation, mothers who are or were sole supporters of families, and mothers who were not employed in a professional class of occupations. The questions were based on those used in Smith's 1991 study of the "Agreement of Adolescent Educational Expectations with Perceived Maternal and Paternal Educational Goals" and Handel's 1991 study "Scientist Mothers and Daughters."

This study was originally limited to daughters in their freshman and sophomore years of high school as I believed that if discussions about education and careers were going to occur between mothers and daughters, this was the most likely time period. Additionally, these are the years in which many high schools administer PSATs and SATs, making discussions about post secondary education both at home and at school more probable. After I conducted an interview with one freshman, I realized that this 9th grader had not done the kind of thinking about college preparation I was seeking for this study, and, therefore, 11th graders were added.

The purpose of contacting daughters first was to yield a more diverse mix of mother/daughter pairs. My concern was that had I recruited the mothers first they may have coerced their daughters to participate, which may have resulted in uncooperative teens. This concern was realized with one mother/daughter pair in which the mother was very enthusiastic about participating while the daughter had reservations. Briefly, at our first meeting in which we discussed the interview process and their possible participation, the mother tried several times to persuade the daughter to participate despite my reinforcement that it was the daughter's choice. Ultimately, they scheduled an appointment for a first interview, but I arrived to find a note on the door of their house indicating that the daughter had changed her mind. An additional intent of recruiting daughters first was to avoid the findings of other studies, namely that identifying mothers first yielded those who already wanted to make changes in their lives (e.g., Beutell & Greenhaus, 1983; Farmer & Fyans, 1980; Manis & Markus, 1978) or mothers who are already engaged in careers (e.g., Graddick & Farr, 1983; Gray, 1983).

I had hoped to include maternal grandmothers in this study as their responses may have shed light on multigenerational educational and career messages. Unfortunately, the maternal grandmothers were unwilling or unable to participate. This may be a variable for inclusion in future studies.

Completed questionnaires were reviewed for eligibility for participation in the interviews. Eligible working-class mothers and their daughters were telephoned, given a brief overview of the study and the time commitment involved, which yielding three pairs willing to participate. The study was originally limited to single, working-class mothers; however, due to the low survey return rate (n=8) and the low number of eligible participants, the high school in an adjacent town with similar demographics was contacted to which an additional 160 questionnaires were distributed (Appendices J-M), yielding a similarly low survey return rate (n=14), and four additional pairs to be interviewed. Snowball or chain sampling (Patton, 1990) did not prove effective in eliciting recommendations of other mothers and daughters for participation. Also, flyers advertising the need for additional participants were posted throughout the towns in several public locations (e.g., community centers, teen center, churches, libraries, Laundromats, literacy project) were not effective in eliciting additional pairs.

The difficulty obtaining a sufficient number of participants also resulted in broadening the definition of eligible study participants. The study was originally designed for single, working-class mothers who were currently sole supporters of their families, but was expanded to include working-class mothers who are, or were, sole supporters of their families, thus preserving the study's purpose of hearing from mothers who had experience as sole supporters of themselves and their children.

The original target of twenty pairs would allow for attrition, with the hope of retaining between ten and twelve pairs and would make possible "saturation of information" (Seidman, 1991; 1998). In in-depth interviewing, the adequate number of participants is determined when the interviewer begins to hear the same information again and again from different participants and is learning nothing new from the interviews (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1991; 1998). Due to the difficulty of securing even seven pairs, my dissertation committee approved the reduced number of pairs for the study. Despite the small sample, saturation of information was attained in the areas presented in the following findings chapters.

An introductory meeting was scheduled for each pair during which participants were informed of the research parameters and their rights and responsibilities in this research through a voluntary consent form (see Appendix N). Mothers gave consent for their daughters, as the daughters were under eighteen years of age, and mothers were informed at the outset that any information given during their daughters' interviews would be kept confidential. The participants were asked not to discuss the content of their interviews with each other until after all interviews with their pair had been conducted. It was noted by comments made during interviews, however, that discussions had occasionally occurred. Some pairs even went as far as to make arrangements with each other to have a mother/daughter day after the interviews to discuss their responses.

2. The Participants.

Study participants were seven Caucasian working-class mother-daughter pairs from two western Massachusetts mill towns with an average population of 9,500 and a median income of $35,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Twenty-five percent of the

towns' residents had some college coursework and 14% held bachelor's degrees or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The towns were chosen as historically they have had a high rate of intergenerational welfare, of single mothers, and of teen pregnancy per capita. The town's people were predominantly Caucasian, thus yielding a fairly homogeneous population. Additionally, women in these communities have traditionally had children at a young age, and families consisting of four or more generations were not uncommon.

All mothers selected for this study had experience as sole supporters of families, whether as single mothers or as married mothers. The average age of the mothers in this study was 40, and the average age of the daughters was 15.5; most of the daughters were either in, or had just completed, tenth grade at the time of the study. The mothers all had bore children either in their teens or early twenties, and one mother dropped out of high school in tenth grade due to pregnancy. While none of the daughters in this study had children themselves, one daughter had two friends who had borne children while in eighth grade. [See Appendices O-Q for Charts of Participant Profiles; Appendix R, Participant Pair Profile Summaries, and Appendix S, Participant Pair Educational Summaries designed to help the reader better connect with the participants.]

The high degree of intergenerational welfare has a bearing on this study in that the Massachusetts Welfare Reform Act may have had an impact on the thinking about education and economic achievement. Additionally, there is little research on poor women from rural settings (Schein, 1995), also noting that the stereotype of the poor is that they are usually urban and are persons of color. Porter (1989) found that poverty rates are higher in rural areas than in urban areas and that more than one-quarter of poor Americans live in rural areas. The line drawn in this study between the working-class

and the poor is a very fine one as those at the lower end of the working-class spectrum are often just a paycheck or two away from poverty, often moving back and forth across the poverty line (Bane & Ellwood, 1983; Duncan, 1984). The working-class women in this study may have once been classified as poor while they were self-supporters if they were living on government assistance (e.g., WIC[2], food stamps, welfare, medical) but are currently living on a wage that allows them to live paycheck to paycheck without government assistance. This purposive, homogeneous sampling (Patton, 1990; Williamson, Barry, & Dorr, 1982) will allow future research to test additional variables such as time cohorts, gender, race, ethnicity, and rural versus urban populations.

E. Research Methodologies

1. Pilot Studies.

Prior to this study, two pilot studies were conducted in order to test methodological approaches and methods of data collection and interpretation.

The first pilot study employed directed journal writing as a way of gathering text in order to perform text analysis; the purpose was to identify implicit or embedded voices and themes within the texts and to identify the participants' agency in developing their beliefs about education. Text analysis helped to uncover the messages about education and its value received by and incorporated into the values and beliefs about education held by the participants in the study. The second pilot study used an in-depth, phenomenological interview method, which allowed the researcher to put participants' behavior into their

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[2] *Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a federal program administered in Massachusetts by the state's Department of Public Health (DPH) to prevent premature birth and infant mortality and to improve the health and cognitive development of young children. WIC provides vouchers for nutritious foods, Farmers' Market coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables, nutrition counseling, information on proper diet during pregnancy, immunizations, screenings, and referrals.* (Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 2005)

contexts (Seidman, 1991; 1998) and to begin to understand the thinking behind the participant's formation of educational values.

a. Directed Journal Writing.

In the first pilot study, three working-class women were given a list of questions designed to elicit written responses. Text analysis was used to identify educational beliefs via "story chains," participants' agency in formulating their beliefs about education, and identification of the source of those beliefs via voice identification. What emerged from this pilot study was the common belief that education was valuable. The study identified a dominant story chain that identified the women's core belief about education (*education = increased income and economic status*). The study also identified an extended story chain that more fully articulated the structure of the women's beliefs about education (*education = opportunity = amount of income = material wealth = good life*). Both story chains were important to understand participants' motivations for pursuing an education. Despite the findings, it was clear from this pilot study that more contextual information was needed about the participants' experience with education, the levels of education of the participants' families or primary caregivers, and more about their career aspirations. For these reasons, a second pilot study was conducted using in-depth, phenomenological interviews.

b. In-Depth Phenomenological Interviewing.

Participants in the second pilot study consisted of a case study of a working-class mother and her two teenaged daughters. Phenomenological in-depth interviewing was used to identify the mother's implicit and/or explicit messages to her daughters about education and to identify what messages, if any, the daughters were receiving. During the

pilot study, four sources of educational messages were identified (mothers, fathers, siblings, television), the most influential of which were the mother's messages, which were repeated nearly verbatim by the daughters; and, notably, the mother reported that these were the same messages given to her by her mother. Other sources of messages were from sibling to sibling, from father to daughter, and from television portrayals of education and careers. The latter source is consistent with Sidel's (1990) observations that television was a significant source of perceptions, yet in this study the daughters' interpretations of television portrayals were an unrealistic influence on the daughters' perceptions. While the phenomenological method of in-depth interviewing allowed the emergence of contextual information that was not present in the first pilot study, as will be discussed below, there were drawbacks to this methodology.

c. Conclusions from Pilot Studies.

Several conclusions arose from the methods used in the pilot studies. First, while the structured questions of the directed journal entries were helpful to focus the interviews and allow comparisons of responses across participants, they allowed little flexibility, depth, or contextual information in the responses. In-depth, phenomenological interviewing, on the other hand, yielded both rich information and extraneous information. In-depth interviewing, however, also de-emphasized specific follow up questions to be compared across participants.

Another outcome of the second pilot study was that the structure of the three-interview format of phenomenological interviewing was not appropriate for the daughters. The first interview in the series was about the participants' educational and work histories to provide context; the second interview was to obtain the concrete details

of certain experiences, while the final interview was to reflect on the meaning of those experiences (Cleary, Casey, & Hudson-Ross, 1993; Seidman, 1991; 1998). While the interviews were to be approximately ninety minutes in length (Cleary, 1991; Seidman, 1991; 1998), the daughters' interviews lasted no more than sixty minutes because they did not have lengthy educational and work histories. It was therefore determined that in the larger study, interviews one and two would be combined for the daughters.

2. Semi-structured In-depth Interviews.

As a result of the methodological limitations and strengths noted from the pilot studies, semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed for this study. This methodology afforded the flexibility and the development of context while allowing the pursuit of themes and questions to be answered by all participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Fetterman, 1989; Kvale, 1996), therefore, allowing responses to be compared across participants. While semi-structured interviews pursue specific themes and questions, researchers need to recognize that the interview/conversation must be open to change to pursue new and important themes or questions that may arise (Bogdan, 1992). The use of a semi-structured interview process in conjunction with in-depth interviewing has been used in other studies to cover a set of general questions by interviewers (e.g., Handel, 1991; Spillers & Katz, 1989). Each interview was recorded and later transcribed.

3. Topical Guide.

To ensure that all topics and lines of inquiry were addressed by participants during their interviews, a topical guide (Bogdan, 1992), also known as an interview guide (Seidman, 1991; 1998; Weiss, 1994), was developed. The topical guide was not used to

direct the interviews and was not arranged by interview (Seidman, 1991; 1998), but served as a checklist of topics, which easily identified topics addressed or not addressed by the participants. If participants had not addressed the topics over the course of their interviews, they were pointedly asked. The topical guide also acted as a set of prompts for the interviewer (Weiss, 1994) to jump-start the dialogue when open responses waned.

The foundation of topics from which this topical guide was developed emanated from the questionnaire Handel used in her 1991 study of daughters of scientist mothers. Topics to be covered were from three broad areas: education, future aspirations (e.g., education and work), and role models and mentors (Appendix T). These questions sought to elicit information regarding mothers' and daughters' socialization from their own mothers, or families of origin about education in order to understand the context of the formation of their beliefs about education and what those issues mean to them; and, their views of their own mother's work and educational experiences, in addition to issues related to role models and/or mentors.

Participants were not provided a copy of the topical guide. At the beginning of the first interview, I explained that during the interviews if they saw me referring to a sheet of paper, it was a list of questions that I hoped all participants would cover. If they did not cover the topics on the list during the interviews, I told them that I would ask the questions outright.

4. Interview Format.

In this study, the three-interview format worked well for some of the mothers; however, as with the daughters, others had little educational or work history, which became evident during the first interviews, at which time it was determined to combine

their first and second interviews. Each participant's series of interviews occurred over a one to three week period.

Each interview began by my stating the purpose of the interview (e.g., history with education and work, current experience with education and work, and future plans for education and work). I then reiterated the points from the consent form (e.g., they could stop the interviews at any time; they had the right not to answer any questions; all information was confidential). At the first interview, I also informed the participants that I would take notes during the interview as a back up in case the tape recorder failed. I would make notes of any questions for later as I did not want to interrupt the flow of their conversation, nor did I want them to be concerned about what I was writing.

All first interviews began with the open ended question, "Tell me about your experiences with education," and once a complete educational history had been obtained, the open ended question, "Tell me about your work experience" was posed. Participants' recorded interviews were reviewed between meetings and points needing clarification identified. If any points needed clarification, they were posed at the beginning of the next interview (e.g., how old was daughter at the time of your divorce?). Open ended questions for the second interviews, or as part of the first interviews if the participant did not have much educational and work experience, included, "Tell me about your current experiences with work," and "Tell me about your current experiences with education." The final interview for each participant, whether it was the second or third interview, included the open ended question, "Tell me about your future plans with regard to education and careers."

5. Field Notes.

During each interview, brief field notes were recorded in order to capture any significant non-verbal reactions that were not captured on audiotape (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). Additionally, reflective field notes were written after each interview to record more subjective observations of the interviews and the research process, including "speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices" (Bogden & Biklen, 1998, p. 123). Field notes were also used to reflect on analysis, method, ethical dilemmas, frames of mind, and on points needing clarification. All interviews were transcribed verbatim (Bogden & Biklen, 1992; Kvale, 1996; Weiss, 1994), and notes regarding non-verbal behaviors documented in the field notes were integrated.

6. Transcripts.

Each interview was recorded, listened to in between interviews, and, upon completion of each participants' series of interviews, transcribed by a transcriptionist. Upon my receipt of the transcripts, each tape was reviewed and compared with the transcripts for accuracy; edits were made where necessary. The individual interviews for each participant were then merged into one document and the lines of text numbered using the line numbering feature in MicroSoft Word. Transcripts were then ready for analysis.

F. Data Analysis

1. Thematic Analysis.

Analysis of the interview data, the transcribed interviews and the field notes, was conducted using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) to identify over-arching themes and issues, beginning with the categories covered in the topical guide. After I read the

verbatim transcripts of the interviews several times, referred to the field notes and interview summaries, and referred back to the questions that framed this study, I summarized and organized the information in the first round of coding by marking, sorting text, and "pasting" text together on a wall according to the items in the topical guide. These subgroups were first organized by participant pairs to determine intergenerational transmission and later by responses from the mothers and all of the daughters to determine whether there were generational consistencies.

While reviewing the latter version of the coding, and reading and rereading excerpts of it, I observed that the themes that emerged most strongly were messages about success and how to become successful. Since the participants were purposefully chosen because they were working-class and because the mothers were chosen because they were or had been sole supporters, the text was then coded for these categories, which yielded the themes of messages attributable to the working-class work ethic and those of sole supporters. The data were then recoded and resorted using these themes, which resulted in several subcodings, thereby breaking the analysis into discreet subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) that were common to some, if not all, participants. Also included within these themes were two *in vivo* terms, *pushing* and *them*, for which a word search was conducted using MicroSoft Word's "find" feature.

The overarching themes and their interplay, and the discreet subcategories helped to organize a model for the analysis (Appendix T), which also revealed messages that included specific do's and don'ts necessary to become successful, which then defined what success meant to the participants. Also identified were contradictions

between messages, gaps in participants' knowledge, and the need for positive role models and mentors.

2. Trustworthiness of Data.

In order to help ensure the trustworthiness of the data, at two points during the analysis, the participants were invited to review and comment on materials; this is also known as member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The first member check was offered once the interviews were transcribed by giving the participants an opportunity to review and amend transcripts and to review their summary profile (Appendix U). Participants were also given an opportunity to review the final dissertation prior to submission (Appendix V). Member checking was also used as a way to further establish the trust of the participants by allowing them to review materials and to have an opportunity to have input on the presentation of their information.

3. Limitations of Study.

The study was limited by the self-selected population itself and the sample size, because of recruiting methods, target population, and geography. In order to ensure a homogenous population, this study was purposefully limited to Caucasian working-class teenaged girls and their mothers in a targeted geographic region and was further limited to mothers who were or had been sole supporters of families. Sample size was further hindered by recruiting choices, recruiting daughters first and mothers second, and by recruiting through the high schools. Additionally, this voluntary study led to a self-selected population that, with the exception of one mother, believed education was of value, which was made clear by the fact that all of the daughters intended to pursue post-secondary education. I believe that the pair who dropped out of the study was the

exception and was probably more representative of the population for which this study was designed. One of the initial questions in this study was whether mothers and their daughters discuss education and careers. The latter pair had little to say about either their educational histories or any conversations about education, which may have contributed to their withdrawal. Their experiences, or lack thereof, and those of others with similar experiences, may have resulted in additional or different findings for this study.

4. Presentation of Participants.

The presentation of participants and their views on education and careers were presented in three ways. At-a-glance charts summarize comparable participant information (Appendices O-Q), and summary profiles of each mother-daughter pairing (Appendices R and S) are provided to help readers connect with the participants (Cleary, et al., 1993). The third presentation method was within the findings chapters in which I used quotes from the participants, which were sometimes used in their entirety and sometimes spliced together to achieve fluidity. Ellipses were used to indicate omissions, and brackets, when necessary, to clarify the participants' words and to identify where changes were made. While research has shown that such speech acts such as "like," "ums," "ers," "uh-huhs," etc. may be an attempt to articulate new information or perspective expressed (DeVault, 1999), when presenting participants' quotes in this study, such speech patterns were omitted so as to not draw attention away from the content; however, participants' grammar and syntax were not modified.

Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants. It should be noted that while participants were asked to choose their own pseudonyms, only half did

so; therefore, pseudonyms were chosen for the remaining participants. However, because a couple of participants chose pseudonyms that would be distracting to the reader (e.g., "fish," "Rex Trailor") I changed their pseudonyms to less distracting names that were more consistent with names chosen by the other participants.

In addition to using pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the participants, any references to the names of their high schools, towns, or other identifiable information were also changed to protect the identities of the participants. Since the title of the study includes the geographical reference "western Massachusetts," I did not change the names of the local colleges and universities to which the participants referred.

G. Summary

This research began from a feminist research perspective seeking to learn about participants' perspectives on education and careers, thus giving them a voice, in order to answer the questions that framed this study. In order to elicit qualified and interested participants for this study, two hundred eighty surveys were distributed in the high school homerooms of 9th, 10th, and 11th grade girls in two working-class Massachusetts mill towns. Twenty-two surveys were returned and eleven qualified mother/daughter pairs were contacted to participate in a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Seven pairs consented to participate and six pairs completed the series of interviews. A two-interview format was used with the daughters, and a three-interview format, when possible, was used with the mothers. A topical guide was used to provide comparable categories of participant data from the interviews. Field notes were used during and after interviews to capture relevant information or impressions that could not be caught on audiotape. Interviews were transcribed, member checks were conducted, and

thematic analysis was employed to identify themes articulated by the participants. A summary chart of the participants and profiles of the pairs were developed to help the readers of this study to connect with the voices presented in this study. In the following three chapters, I will present the findings from the research and, in the final chapter, I will discuss implications for future research and practice and provide a conclusion for the study with a final note on feminist research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: MESSAGES OF WORK AND SUCCESS

> All's I aspire for my kids is to go to school, behave, pay attention in classes, take your notes, do your studying, be the best that you can be. If you have a goal of being a straight A student, then you will be. If you set goals for yourself that you want to graduate, travel, college later on, whatever, fulfill those goals because if you don't, you're going to be stuck in the same situation where a lot of the kids that I went to school with are now. They never fulfilled their goals, and they're stuck in the same town that we're living in, and a lot of them are still hanging out in the same barroom that's still there today, and I don't want that for my kids. -- Laura

This study showed that both covert and overt communications occurred between the mothers and daughters of this self-selected group of participants. The messages from mothers to daughters were about the working-class work ethic, to which were added messages from the mothers' experiences as sole supporters. The dominant message from the mothers to their daughters was *be successful*, which had specific meaning and was grounded in the work ethic valued by the participants, both of which were colored in varying degrees by the mothers' experiences as sole supporters of families. The participants believed that success began with good grades, which would lead to college scholarships and a college education. The latter was deemed necessary by all for lifelong success, as a college education would inevitably lead to a good job, a financially secure life, and, ultimately, freedom, or, from their perspective, social mobility—namely, entry into the middle-class.

Messages of the work ethic, the mothers' experiences as sole supporters, and messages contrasting those who are successful and those who are not, were used by the mothers to push the daughters toward success (see Appendix W for a diagram of how these messages converged). The interplay between the messages revealed

contradictions that may hinder the daughters' attainment of success (e.g., limitations of the ethos, becoming socially mobile may distance or alienate family of origin). The consequence of the mothers' desire for their daughters' success, the contradictions between the messages designed to push the daughters toward success, and their lack of procedural knowledge, provided a lens through which to view the impact of role models and mentors in the participants' lives.

The findings from this study are separated into three chapters: the messages of work and success, the mechanisms through which the messages are conveyed, and lastly, the contradictory messages and the need for positive role models.

In this chapter I will focus on the covert and overt messages provided by the mothers: those of the working-class work ethic, those from their experiences as sole supporters of families, and those used to push the daughters toward success. I will first set forth the multigenerational messages of the working-class work ethic used by the participants. I will then present the mothers' messages of their experiences as sole supporters. Lastly, I will discuss the covert and overt messages used by the participants to describe those who are successful and those who are not.

A. Messages of The Working-class Work Ethic

The definitions of social classes (e.g., working-, middle-, upper-class) provided in the introduction to this study were determined by the respective focus of the authors (e.g., status, income, power and authority) (Bourdieu, 1984b; Warner, 1960; Wright, 2000). Within this study, messages of the work ethic valued by its working-class participants were identified. [Appendix X is a chart of the values identified by these participants to help clarify and define working-class by way of contrasting those values with those

typically identified as middle class.] These messages, as provided from the mothers to their daughters, set the framework for what they believed it meant to be successful and the work ethic they deemed as necessary for becoming successful. In this section, I will focus on characteristics of the working-class work ethic as identified by the participants through their messages.

Several consistent messages about the work ethic valued by the working-class were identified in this study. Many of these messages were multigenerational, being passed from grandmothers to mothers and from mothers to their own daughters. Those messages were as follows: do things the right way the first time, don't rely on the help of others, quitting is not acceptable, and hard work is gratifying and effort brings its own reward.

1. Doing Things the Right Way.

The working-class work ethic included multigenerational messages about doing things the right way the first time. Hannah answered, "if you do a good job, do it right the first time; if you're not going to do it right, why bother?" "I do it right the first time, like my mother always taught me," said Vivian, a message that her daughter, Tricia, had also internalized, "I want to do it myself because I like doing things myself because I know I'll get it done the right way, which I definitely get from my mother." In other words, if they are going to do the work anyway they might as well do it right, whether it is a job or an education as will be discussed in Chapter V.

2. Don't Rely On the Help of Others.

The message to do things the right way the first time may stem from the belief that individuals could not rely on the help of others, another message passed from

mothers to daughters. Hannah told Lynn, "It's not going to be handed to you," while Rexene told her daughters, "Don't always think that people are going to give you the answers. You've got to try for yourself. Nothing's free; people aren't always willing to give something." Because the mothers believed that they could not rely on others, Rexene also told her daughters to "Get an education, and don't ever think that you have to depend on anybody. You've got to be able to take care of yourself. It's tough out there." This work ethic may stem from the belief that life can be difficult, but you have to work anyway, as indicated by Hannah's message to her daughters, "There are times where you have to do what you don't want to do; sometimes that's life. You have to suck it up and drive on."

3. Quitting Is Not Acceptable.

Sentiments like Hannah's may be why the work ethic also included the notion that quitting is not acceptable. Rexene, for example, told her daughter that "If you sign up at the beginning of the season, you're going to finish the season. You're not going to quit in between." This message may give her daughter the impression that you must finish what you start, no matter how difficult or impossible the situation. The message does not take into consideration possible contextual effects on her daughter's self-esteem (e.g., bullying received in the situation may be more damaging than the effects of quitting).

4. Hard Work Is Gratifying and Effort Brings Its Own Reward.

The working-class messages presented above led to the dominant messages of the work ethic which were that hard work was gratifying and effort brings its own reward. These messages were so intertwined that they appeared to be two halves of the

same message. As Vivian told her daughter, "You have to work hard for what you want and you'll achieve, there's nothing more gratifying. When you achieve you feel proud, money isn't everything. Effort will get great results" (e.g., grades, scholarships, success). Likewise, Rexene said she wanted her daughters "to succeed and be proud of it knowing that they've worked for it and it wasn't given to them." Similarly, Hannah told her daughter that if she wanted material things she had to "work for it. She can do what she wants, be what she wants, go to school where she wants, but she's going to have to work for it." The messages about hard work were multigenerational as evidenced by one Laura received from her father to "...work hard, if you want something you have to work for it."

Related to the message that effort brings its own reward was the message that working one's way up from the bottom is respectable, which was identified by Laura, an assistant operations manager. Laura told her daughters "I started at the bottom of the totem pole, and I worked myself up the totem pole and it's by dedication and hard work, [I] try to instill that in them, you have to break your back to get recognized in any company you work for, with hard work and dedication you can succeed within your environment." This message assumed that it is not as respectable if you did not break your back by starting from the bottom, and it assumed that society is a meritocracy and that hard work *will* be rewarded. Unlike participants in Luttrell's study (1984) who mentioned other variables such as "luck, knowing the right people, or being male, as affecting a person's opportunities" (p. 107), the participants in this study were not aware of the fallacy of meritocracy or other factors that may influence the attainment of success.

B. Messages from the Mothers as Sole Supporters

In addition to messages of the working-class work ethic, the mothers had also relayed their experiences as single mothers and/or as sole supporters of families to their daughters. The message that dominated these stories was that their daughters must become successful so they would not have to struggle as their mothers did, return to school later in life to improve their skills, and not be able to support themselves. Also evident in these messages was the influence of the working-class messages, as discussed above.

1. Struggling Supporters.

Stories of the mothers' struggles as sole supporters were common, often focusing on the attainment of essential daily needs such as finding safe housing and having enough money to pay bills and to put food on the table. These stories were mixed with terror, sadness, and, occasionally, humor. Rexene recalled her life-threatening experiences to find a safe home: "I had been broken into a couple times. I was lucky I never got raped. When I was sleeping upstairs in the bedroom and I heard someone come in and it scared me, and I came downstairs and there was a guy standing in my apartment with a board, and I came to the top of the stairs and I just screamed and he ran out back out the door that he came in. He ended up breaking the lock." Helga typified the struggle encountered by most of the mothers with regard to expenses, "I had a $1000 mortgage over there to pay, and I was only by myself, you know? Then food, not to mention everything else, electricity, and phone." Hannah, on the other hand, joked that her daughter said, "'You fed me Ramen Noodles.' I don't make many Ramen Noodles now, but back then the Ramen Noodles were cheap. So she knows that it was a

struggle. It's not like she was ever hungry or ever went hungry or anything like that. She knows it wasn't easy because I told her it wasn't easy and she knows that it would be hard, she's never felt the hardship."

2. Returning to School.

The mothers worked hard to support their families, often holding more than one job at a time or working many hours of overtime. Despite their efforts, when they reentered the workforce their low levels of education (most had a high school diploma and some college coursework), and lack of work experience from spending time at home with their children, resulted in frequent layoffs. Helga, who suffered many layoffs, said about them, "A lot, yeah. I was the last one in the door is the first one to go." The consequence was insufficient wages to support their families. (See Appendix O for mothers' levels of education and current and previous occupations.) As a result, a few mothers returned to school to better their skills in an effort to obtain better paying jobs. While Laura worked her way up the career ladder, as mentioned above, mothers like Hannah worked toward a bachelor's degree. Helga recalled why she returned to school, which hearkened back to two of the messages of the work ethic: *don't rely on the help of others* and *quitting is not acceptable*:

> Because, due to my situation, being a single parent, not having a career, not having any further education other than high school, it was very, very difficult, for me anyway to make the money that you needed in order to be self-sufficient, to be able to take care of me and take care of her, to provide the things that she would have had if there was two [parents]. Basically, I know what I went through after we left, you know and it's like, yeah, maybe I have some skills, but the skills I did have didn't quite cut the cheese. I think I've done OK for myself. I just didn't lay down and die. I knew I needed to do something so I went back to school.

3. Supporting One's Self.

Jane, who reported not having many conversations with her daughter about education, said, "I don't know if I've given her a spiel except that women have to be prepared. Not [that] there's not a team or cooperation and your husband can support you, but you need your own ability to support yourself, whether it be investment or in retirement." Helga commented, "It sucks having to work for a living. The value is you learn a lot, but the money stinks. It's nice to have something to fall back on, especially a woman. It's difficult for single mothers to make enough money." She believed that "nowadays a woman has to be able to support herself, never mind depending on a man. So I guess I want her to be self-sufficient, self-supportive, and if she doesn't have an education, she'll only be making that $7.75 an hour. If she doesn't have to work, great, but it's always nice to have a career to fall back on. Well, I guess when I was her age I came from the old school. The man supported the wife."

The participants in this study mirrored Schein's (1995) findings that the participants were "mothers first" and that "their most important role is that of mother, their most important priority is the well-being of their children. They view the provider role through the lens of motherhood, not vice versa." (Schein, 1995, p. 121) The fact that the mothers may have shielded their daughters from these experiences while they were occurring may be why none of the daughters spoke about the financial and emotional struggles their mothers endured as sole supporters.

4. Intersecting Messages.

While the findings of the working-class messages including "success is having a good job and being able to support yourself and your family" confirmed other research

(Grimes & Morris, 1997), the messages from the mothers' experiences as sole supporters were not as prevalent as those of the working-class work ethic and were typically enmeshed with or overshadowed by them. Although one could argue that the messages that "you could not depend on others," "quitting is not acceptable," and "hard work is its own reward," may be a result of the mothers' experiences as sole supporters, Sennett and Cobb (1972) identified similar messages over thirty years ago in their study with Portuguese immigrant fathers who were also sole supporters of families. The messages of the work ethic were a foundation of working-class values, and Sennett and Cobb's study provided evidence that the foundation has been in place for generations. This is further supported by Kohn's findings that "present social class position matters more for values and orientation than do class origins" (1977, p. 137). Kohn's findings may also explain why the working-class work ethic, rather than messages from the mothers' experiences as sole supporters, dominated the messages from the mothers to the daughters in this study.

C. Messages of Success and Nonsuccess

In addition to messages of the working-class work ethic and those of the mothers' experiences as sole supporters, messages of what it meant to be successful and unsuccessful were the most prevalent messages in this study. The dominant message from these mothers to their daughters was *be successful*. In fact, the messages regarding the work ethic were a foundation upon which messages of what it meant to be successful were built, with the intent of producing successful daughters.

The consequences of not fulfilling the characteristics of the work ethic, of not becoming successful as defined by working-class standards, was to become unsuccessful

like *them*, an *in vivo* term used by the participants that was typically uttered with a tone of disdain. Evaluation of the participants' discussions identified two categories of *them*: 1.) a positive, successful *them* that all aspired to become, and 2.) a negative, unsuccessful *them* that all wished to avoid becoming. Both images of *them* were tinged with stereotype and connotations of classism, which could be clearly heard in the messages relayed by the participants. In this section, I will set forth the characteristics identified by the participants of each of the "*them's*" and the covert and overt messages embedded within those messages about what it means to be successful or not.

1. Unsuccessful *Them.*

The participants articulated two categories of *them* whom they identified as being unsuccessful. One category was elusive, not directly named, but was identified through the undesirable characteristics and labels participants attributed to *them*, which may be based on the participants' experiences and surroundings and which painted an image of what all participants aspired to avoid becoming. The unsuccessful *them* for both the mothers and the daughters were the mothers of this study, which both mothers and daughters framed as not wanting to repeat their mothers' mistakes. The other unsuccessful *them* were generally categorized by such negative labels as high school drop outs, teen mothers, and lazy and unambitious people who have no goals, such as welfare recipients, low wage earners, and factory workers. The mothers' purpose in applying the labels was to call attention to the negative traits of the unsuccessful so that the daughters would adopt the messages, which they did, and so that the daughters would break the "cycle." Often the categories of the unsuccessful *them* overlapped and included their mothers' mistakes.

a. Mothers' Mistakes.

The messages of the daughters learning from and not repeating the mothers' "mistakes" were prevalent throughout the interviews, but not always overt. Both mothers and daughters viewed the mothers' "mistakes" as having dropped out of high school, having children at a young age, and not attending college; these were viewed as having limited the mothers' opportunities. Tricia typified the daughters' desires of not wanting to repeat their mothers' "mistakes" when she said about her mother, "She didn't go to college, she got married right away and she had kids right away. She learned from all those mistakes and she uses that and preaches to me and [my brother] about that stuff because she doesn't want us to make the same mistakes she did. She tells me she doesn't want me to make the mistakes that she did, by not really paying attention in school, not going boy-crazy." While many of the daughters considered their mothers' marrying young or having children at an early age a "mistake," none of the daughters noted that they themselves were the results of those "mistakes." It is important to note that the daughters were careful not to speak negatively about their mothers, and the daughters were also careful not to lump their mothers into the category of the unsuccessful *them*; they discussed only their mothers' actions and not them personally. The result was covert and overt messages about learning from their mothers' "mistakes."

As a result of their "mistakes," the mothers relayed the message that the daughters should have opportunities that the mothers themselves did not. Hannah both hoped and encouraged Lynn to avail herself of opportunities in which Hannah herself would have liked to have participated: "Well obviously I would like her to have the high

school experiences that I didn't and have the college experiences that I didn't. How she chooses to do that is her choice, I mean, she's the popular one and does cheering and does the team stuff and I never did that kind of thing, you know, it just wasn't me. And I think that she would do the dorm thing and the sororities and all that kind of stuff and a back packing tour when she graduates. I'd like to see her do that. It's kind of fun for me. I never got to do that part [look at colleges]. I enjoy doing that stuff with her." Similarly, Vivian said, "I never got to do either [college, career] to find out who I really am. I got married so young; I had children so young and played grownup through my early 20s. When it comes to education, she knows that I wish I would have done it better. She knows that I wish I wouldn't have been so boy crazy with one guy throughout high school. So that put a damper on me even trying to be involved in anything else." During the interviews Vivian reported having pled with Tricia, "…really opening my heart with the tears bleeding out of it because it hurt back then, and Tricia, I really, really hope for you that you get to experience this because high school can be so fun. You can learn so much about yourself and other people. The opportunities are there with much less responsibility. So enjoy it to its fullest that it can give you." Vivian also believed that Tricia was "learning from my own experiences, my own wisdom" from what Vivian perceived to be her own mistakes. This was similar to Sennett and Cobb's (1972) findings that "the father doesn't ask the child to take the parents' lives as a model, but as a warning" and Schaef's (1981) findings that mothers often encouraged their daughters to achieve what they did not.

b. High School Drop Outs.

Some of the daughters recognized that their mothers were pushing them not repeat their mothers' "mistakes." Lynn, for example, said of her mother, "She actually dropped out of high school in tenth grade but she was pregnant with me and so she had to go back and get her GED and she had to take night courses for college and it's been a long time, like she's still doing college now and so why because she kind of wants me to have the whole thing that she didn't really get to do. And so like that's the other reason she's like push, push, pushes. She doesn't want me to miss out on opportunities." Lynn believed that her mother pushed her hard "because she wants me to do good, stay focused, go to school, etc., so I don't end up pretty much like she did, dropping out of school, and like raising a family and it took a while for her to get back on her feet before she had a steady job and had anything she wanted."

c. Teen Pregnancy.

The issue of not repeating the mothers' "mistakes" also raised the issue of teen pregnancy; however, very few mothers mentioned the topic without prompting, and when asked, the topic was addressed matter of factly. Rexene reported telling her daughters, "It would really disappoint us, but we're not going to disown you for it. We hope that you'll be smarter than that, that if you're going to have sex, you'll come to us." Similarly, Hannah reported, "We've talked about [teen pregnancy] several times. (laughs) Well, obviously we don't want her to be a teen mother, struggle financially, she would probably never, if she was lucky, where she would really like to be financially, I think she's had pretty decent childhood as far as fun and proms and things like that."

The minimal discussion about teen pregnancy, both during the interviews and between the mothers and daughters, was remarkable given the young ages at which most of these mothers had children (average age = 22) and with one mother having dropped out of high school due to pregnancy. There were several additional reasons why teen pregnancy was a topic worth discussing, including the fact that the towns in which the participants lived have high teen pregnancy rates, with one town having formerly held the distinction of the highest teen pregnancy rate per capita in the country. In fact, one of the daughters in this study reported friends having babies in eighth grade. Nationally, in 2003, 1.4 million unmarried women had children and 9%, or 127,000, of them were high-school aged girls (Hamilton, Martin, & Sutton, 2004). In addition, studies have shown adolescent motherhood is a long-term handicap (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn, & Morgan, 1987; Sidel, 1996), resulting in lower levels of college attendance and incomes less than half than women who first gave birth at age twenty-five (Sidel, 1996).

Mirroring the minimal discussion about teen pregnancy, few mothers mentioned their daughters' futures as including families, unlike the findings of several studies (e.g., Aisenberg and Harrington's 1988 "marriage plot," Holland and Eisenhart's 1990 "culture of romance," McRobbie's 1978 "ideology of romance"). There was also no evidence that the mothers assumed that the daughters would marry, which the above studies found had focused the daughters' educational and career aspirations on acquiring an appropriate husband, or that the daughters' careers would be secondary to family needs (Arnold, 1995). Hannah said, "As of this point, she doesn't want any children (laughs) and that's fine with me." Rexene told her daughters, "You'll have

time for a family. Go out, get a good education, get an education and don't ever think that you have to depend on anybody." Rexene wanted Marque to "keep up with the school stuff then if she wants to have a family go for it. You'll have plenty of time in your life to have a family." Discussions about balancing education, career, and family life did not appear to have taken place, which was particularly surprising in light of the mothers' experiences as sole supporters and the increase in female headed households in the U.S.

The daughters mentioned having families, but in distant terms, usually relaying values gleaned from the work ethic and reflecting their mothers' messages to get an education first and have their families later. "Not till later," said Lynn. "Well, at first, I really don't want to do anything except for like go to college and figure out what I want as a career. And when I'm older like nearing 30, late 20's and then I'll start going to the family thing. I want both, but not till later. I just want to have a stable job, like I want my bank account (laughs), it's always safe and I want a car and I don't want to be in debt or anything. I want to be able to pay my bills and just be financially stable. That's my whole issue with waiting for the family." Similarly Tricia stated, "I'm not going to get married when I'm 19 or 20 like [my mother] did and have kids by the time I'm 21. I don't want to throw away my future. I want to be able to go to school and find ways to do it if for some reason financially I can't. I just want to do it all for myself and get myself where I want to be." She believed she could not pursue her goals if she had children "because when I'm a mom, I'm going to want to put everything for my kids. Like if you see moms, you have to sacrifice so much for their children, good moms, anyway (laughs). So I want to live my life before I ruin someone else's. Once I

find my job, and once I wanna' get married and stuff, that's when I'll move to the suburbs and whatever and the white little picket fence and all that stuff." The daughters' views are supported by Kahn (1980) who found that young women who were career oriented were more likely to avoid imitating their mothers' lifestyles and more likely to put marriage and family on hold.

d. Lazy and Unambitious.

Other characteristics of unsuccessful persons are that they are on public assistance, are lazy, lack ambition, and do not have goals. Popular myth holds that poor and working-class people only want to take advantage of government handouts; however, contrary to that myth, while some of the participants were themselves eligible for public assistance, most did not partake in it and also spoke out against those who did. Hannah stated strongly, "I was raised in one of those...my family didn't exactly believe in welfare, unemployment, that kind of stuff, we worked for what we got and if we didn't have money, we didn't get it, I never even did WIC, everything that we did, I bought, I paid for." Further Hannah stated, "I guess that's just how I was raised. If you want something, you work for it. There are people that truly deserve public assistance and then there are people that take advantage of public assistance."

One daughter referred to "the people in this town," which revealed a class-based perspective in which she believed the unsuccessful *them*, the town's factory workers, to be lazy and unmotivated. Similarly, during the pilot interviews, one daughter referred to not wanting to be like *them* and that "those kind of people" were lazy. Further probing revealed a race-based perspective in which *they* were Latinos/Latinas who hung out on the street corner and were perceived as leeching off of welfare (despite not

knowing whether they were receiving government assistance). Interestingly, the term *they* did not also apply to the Caucasians who sat on the park benches drinking from paper bags.

Sometimes the characteristics of the unsuccessful belonged to their own family members, which is why the mothers wanted their daughters to break the cycle. Vivian, for example, referred several times to her ex-husband as being "lazy" and "lacking ambition." In order to "break the cycle," she wanted her children to go to college and forced her ex-husband to sign an agreement to pay half of the college tuition for her children and is prepared to take him to court to enforce the agreement to ensure that her children have the opportunity. In fact, her daughter Tricia, also subtly referred to *them* with regard to her father as she felt that her grandfather favored another son because of his ambition and success and that was why he also favored her and would help her go to college. Laura mentioned that her mother was lazy because she *only* raised a family of five children and did not work for a living.

Laura also touched on the topic of "breaking the cycle" through her conversations with her daughters about having goals so they would not be like the unsuccessful *them*: "If you set goals for yourself that you want to graduate, travel, college later on, whatever, fulfill those goals because if you don't, you're going to be stuck in the same situation where a lot of the kids that I went to school with are now. They never fulfilled their goals, and they're stuck in the same town that we're living in, and a lot of them are still hanging out in the same barroom that's still there today, and I don't want that for my kids. I want them to be successful, and I talk to them all the time

[about it]. What do you want to be when you grow up? Do you want to go here? Do you want to travel? Where do you want to go to college?"

The daughters had internalized the messages of what it meant to be unsuccessful and, for several daughters, McDonald's workers and factory workers epitomized the lazy and unambitious *them* who worked in low paying, dead end jobs. As Tricia stated, she did not want to struggle financially and did not want to be a "bum, alcoholic, or working at McDonald's, you know, that's not success." Likewise, Ryan did not want to "flip burgers" and Tricia stated she would have attended the local technical school "if I wanted to be a cosmetologist or a plumber and make $16k a year."[3] Two of the daughters referred to factory workers as the unsuccessful *them* that they did not want to become. Lisa, for example, did not want any of the factory jobs held by her mother because "I don't think I'd like it."

Lynn's characterization of the unsuccessful *them* typified and summarized the beliefs of the other participants'. Those who are not successful, according to Lynn,

> Don't go to college. Different to most of my friends or the people I hang out with. There's people that are the exact opposite, they'll go like work at [the factory] which is like the tool factory. They do something that I don't think anyone would want to their whole life and I'm sure it can't be easy to support yourself and actually be happy doing some of the stuff that people do. I don't think because people that don't go to college or get a degree or get a good job or if you end up working at some dead end job, like in [this town] you're not going to ever get anywhere with, then it would hard to support yourself and it's got to be very stressful when you're constantly worrying, and I going to be able to pay my bills? A lot of people in [this town] are just like really, low income, poverty type, I don't want to say scumbags, but a lot of them really are like really gross. And, I don't know, they don't have any like real goals. I guess they don't set high goals for themselves, they don't want to really get out

[3]Tricia was unaware that plumbers are the highest paid of the construction occupations earning between $34,000 and $67,000 per year, without overtime (U.S. Department of Labor-Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002).

> and do anything. So that's what I kind of mean when they have these jobs that are in [this town]. Just kind of like they're here doing nothing and they'll probably be here for the rest of their lives doing exactly the same thing. It's sad.

Labels such as those used by the participants in this study were also found by Reay (1998) in which her participants used euphemisms to distance themselves from others and, as Bourdieu (1990) found, to denote "people like us" and "people not like us," which included class connotations. As will be discussed in the next chapter, not wanting their daughters to be like the negative *them* may be why the mothers pushed their daughters to set goals and achieve good grades so they may obtain scholarships and gain entrance into college. The mothers did not want their daughters to repeat their mistakes and wanted them to break the cycle of the unsuccessful *them*. Both the mothers and the daughters wanted their daughters to achieve the characteristics they attributed to the successful *them*.

2. Successful *Them.*

The opposite of not being like *them* is being like *them*, which for the participants meant being successful. Those whom the participants believe to be successful are a stereotyped image, just as they stereotyped the unsuccessful. To be successful like *them* meant looking like the image of success, becoming educated, and becoming financially secure, which they believed would lead to freedom. However, as will be discussed in Chapter VI, becoming like the positive, successful, and educated *them* was plagued with contradictions.

a. Looking the Image.

Becoming like *them* often referred to image (e.g., looks, popularity, financial status), to which several participants aspired. Helga's image of success was "always

having nice clothes, hair's all done up, throwing money around. It's money. That's success." Vivian made a number of references to wealthier, prettier kids and compared her daughter to them, "She's just as good as them." Similarly, Hannah said, "Lynn is completely the total opposite of me. I was always quiet…she's like Miss Popularity, she's cheering, she plays varsity volleyball, she's in all the clubs, she does all that."

Lynn had an idealized image of her future self:

> Every time I picture myself in the future, I kind of picture myself this business woman in a nice suit with a briefcase, living in an apartment, by myself, in the city and I come home and my cat's there I have like a pint of milk in the refrigerator. I want to work in an office. I just know that I don't want the family right off and what not, so that's just kind of what I picture me, in my apartment, and my cat.

However, Lynn admitted that she knew no professional women who lived that way, and she thought this image may have been derived from images seen in movies.

Image also referred to the schools they would attend (none wanted to attend community colleges), and the jobs they would secure after college (presumably in the professions). Tricia intended to become successful by "making it as far as I can in school…get really good jobs and this and that…then gradually just keep on moving up from there. I wanna' be the person on top when I do it. I know it will take a lot of work to get there and a lot of time. I wanna' be known, I don't wanna' be known like, 'Oh go off to Hollywood' I wanna' be known like where it's like doctors are known, like 'Oh him, Oh great choice. He's a great doctor.' I want to be known in whatever subjects that I'm going to be doing, whether it is psychology or anything like that." Tricia's ideal of success is her uncle who has "the really good job that he's happy with and the pay's good. This guy travels everywhere. He stays at the Breakers, four star hotels. I

just think that's the lifestyle that I have in mind that I want would require something successful."

b. Becoming Educated.

Becoming like the successful *them* also meant becoming educated, which, for these participants, meant a four-year college degree. Rexene contrasted her desire for her daughter to become one of the successful *them* with the desire that her daughter not bring home an unsuccessful *them.* She stated that when Marque "settled down that the person she finds will be educated too. I'm hoping that she's not going to be the type that will bring in some vagabond and have to support him." Hannah's message to Lynn, however, summed up many of the mothers' messages to their daughters with regard to the work ethic and the attainment of success:

> You must be a productive member of society and avoid welfare, maintain your home and family, and work for what you have. If you want material things, work for it; need an education to do it. If you want to be a productive, successful member of society, education is key in that. Do you want to be a homeless street person versus (laughs). She can do what she wants, be what she wants; go to school where she wants, but she's going to have to work for it. She wants a lot monetarily and materially. And in order to do that, you need an education, so pick something you like and pick something that will give you what you want.

c. Becoming Financially Secure.

Another marker of success identified by the participants was financial security, which was not meant to imply that the daughters would need to become rich in order to be successful. Instead, given the mothers' personal experiences as sole supporters and, in some instances, as single mothers, and perhaps tied to working-class values, the value of money was to improve their standard of living by not having to worry about paying their bills or putting food on the table. As Vivian stated, "I don't want her to be a

Rockefeller. It'd be great, sure, she could take care of me, it's not money is everything in the world. I just want her to be able to enjoy life for what it has to offer and unfortunately it costs money." As current or former sole supporters, the mothers hoped their daughters would be successful so they would not have to struggle as they did, living paycheck to paycheck, and having to worry about how to pay their bills. In Helga's words, success was "not having to worry about where you're going to get $50 to pay this bill, you know, and I don't know if it comes from being a single mother, struggling. You know, trying to make that $1000 mortgage each month."

Many of the daughters had internalized their mothers' messages that success is the ability to pay their bills and live comfortably. However, to those messages the daughters attached the notion of being happy with their jobs, which may have been a result of their mothers' experiences with low-paying jobs that held little opportunity for advancement. Tricia, for example, said "success is a job you're happy doing with good pay, having a house, paying your bills, not being in debt, and not having to pawn things." Similarly, Lynn defined success as "having a steady income, you can pay your bills, you can support yourself without struggling, and you can just live like, well you're happy." She later stated, "I just want to have a stable job, like I want my bank account, it's always safe and I want a car and I don't want to be in debt or anything. I want to be able to pay my bills and just be financially stable." Nickita's definition of success was making enough money to afford a car that doesn't break down and "not having to take 40 years of crap in a job you don't like." Despite envying an uncle's successful career, Tricia also considered her parents (mother and stepfather) successful because they had a

house and worked hard to improve it. "They're not in debt. They pay their bills and all that stuff."

In the final analysis, the daughters' images of success returned to the pragmatic working-class messages of working hard to which they added the notion of not being in debt. Tricia best sums up this view:

> Like I don't want to have to struggle financially because I've seen so many people do that and that's no fun…I want to work hard to get on top and, so I don't have to struggle…'cause nothing is handed to you; that's what my mom's told me a lot. Nothing is handed to you. You have to work for everything. I can't depend on that. I have to get where I want by pretty much just doing it myself. Nothing's handed to me on a silver platter. I've heard that one before.

However, when she referred to her future children her message changed, "If I have kids I want stuff to be handed to them on a silver platter, you know, that's what I want for them. That's why I want a successful lifestyle."

d. Becoming Free.

Being like the successful *them* also meant having freedom, which the participants defined as the freedom to direct one's own life, the freedom to achieve, and, as discussed in the previous section, the freedom of a secure financial situation.

i. Freedom to Direct One's Own Life. The ideal of freedom paralleled the working-class work ethic of being independent, not relying on the help of others, and doing things for one's self, in other words, the freedom to direct one's own life. "I don't work for anybody but myself. I want to have my own company or whatever 'cause I don't know what I want to do," said Tricia. The image of freedom also brought to mind Tricia's uncle, "When it comes to success, I mean, he's got the job where he's got the freedom, because he knows this and knows that he has this high position. I mean he's just got the freedom to do this and that and he's got the money

and he's got the happiness basically." These findings did not mirror Luttrell's (1997) in which her participants defined "success as the ability to avoid particular kinds of work for which they felt destined" (p. 39). However, these findings were in line with the characteristics of middle class occupations as identified by Kohn (1977) as being free of close supervision and demanding a greater degree of self-direction. In addition, these findings are in line with several other studies that found that working-class females wanted to enter careers that allowed them to earn an income sufficient to be free from, or less dependent, on the economic control of a man and his income (Weis, 1988; Sidel, 1990; Luttrell, 1997).

ii. Freedom to Achieve. The mothers in this study wanted their daughters to have the freedom to achieve more than the mothers had been able to and to experience things that the mothers wished they themselves had been able to experience such as traveling, college, and sororities. Their aspirations for their daughters are in line with those of the women in Schein's study (1995) in which she said, "All of the women want their children to grow up and live in better circumstances than they are in now. Some hope that their own positive efforts will be a model for their children" (p. 67). Schein also found that "working means money, more control over their lives, and a positive self-image" (Schein, 1995, p. 88). While none of the women in this study stated this outright, Vivian's sentiment of not having to pretend to be like the successful *them* identified a poor self-image due to her lack of education: "It was fudging it in a way for me to prove to my colleagues, who are all educated with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees, that whether they knew my education level or not, that I was just as good and therefore had to prove and produce and put out

results as if maybe someone who with a degree would do." This image was in contrast to the positive self-image Laura attributed to her job, "I think it's made me a stronger person, because I wasn't 10 years ago [when her husband left the family the first time]," which gave Laura the freedom to be independent from her husband and to achieve her own success.

D. Conclusion

For the participants, success meant avoiding certain behaviors or characteristics that they believed identified persons as unsuccessful and meant adopting behaviors or characteristics of those they believed were successful. The characteristics of the successful began with the messages of the working-class work ethic. Becoming successful also meant looking like the image of success and obtaining an education, specifically a college degree, which they believed would lead to financial security and ultimately to freedom, as defined by the participants. Obtaining a college degree meant there would be no need to fudge credentials or intellect or to have to merely pretend to be one of the successful *them*. A college education also meant the ability to obtain a job that afforded a degree of occupational and financial freedom, which was unlike their mothers' experiences. In sum, for the participants, being free meant becoming socially mobile so they could become like the successful *them* by having adequate financial resources for the nice car, the nice clothes, and the nice house that were the images of success.

In the next chapter I will set forth the mechanisms through which the messages identified in this study are conveyed and the lack of procedural knowledge employed to assist their daughters.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: MECHANISMS THROUGH WHICH MESSAGES ARE CONVEYED

> [I]f you want to be a productive, successful member of society, education is key in that. -- Hannah
> I was just thinking to myself now, that term, that feeling. I don't want that for my kids, especially my daughter. I want her to be able to hold her head up and feel just as equal if not better and proud of her results. -- Vivian

The previous chapter set forth the mothers' messages regarding the working-class work ethic, being a sole supporter, and what it means to be successful or not. Those messages colored how the mothers in this study discussed education and careers with their daughters and coalesced into a distinct model of how to become successful and what success meant. In this chapter I will discuss the mechanisms through which these messages were conveyed, setting forth the findings on how mothers pushed and supported their daughters toward success; and, how they emphasized grades, setting goals, and involvement in extra curricular activities. An additional, but equally important, finding was that the mothers lacked the procedural knowledge to effectively assist their daughters toward their mutual goal of success.

A. Pushing for Success

The mothers in this study purposefully pushed their daughters toward success, beginning with the mothers' desire for their daughters to become like those they perceived to be successful. As discussed in the previous chapter, mothers wanted to break the cycle of teen pregnancy, of the lazy and unambitious, and of the deadbeat dads. They also did not want their daughters to repeat their mothers' "mistakes" so they could have opportunities the mothers had not (e.g., college, sororities, careers). To the mothers, their daughters' path toward success began with obtaining good grades, with

the goal being a college education. Their intentional pushing was also a byproduct of the mothers' experiences of not having been supported, or pushed, by their own parents. With one exception, the mothers in this study recalled a lack of parental involvement in their own education. In fact, recalling the lack of encouragement by their parents made several of the mothers sad, which appeared to be a catalyst for them to not repeat what they perceived as their own mothers' mistakes. As a result, several participants referred to being *pushed*, or not, by their own parents and how they, in turn, *pushed* their own children. *Pushing* was another *in vivo* phrase used by the participants. In this section I will discuss the mothers' own lack of support, their pushing and supporting of their own daughters, and the daughters' acknowledgement, or lack of, their mothers' support.

1. Mothers' Own Lack of Support.

Some of the mothers clearly recalled their own parents' lack of involvement and lack of encouragement in their children's education. Rexene, a high school graduate, wondered whether support from her parents would have propelled her toward a post-secondary education:

> I didn't have the family push. Didn't have mother and father to push me. My mother was busy being married, and I think that kids need support. My mother was never involved; my father was never involved with our school. All my father wanted to know was if we passed or failed, and if we failed, you were punished, and if we did good, he very seldom praised us. I guess if I had the push from my dad, if my dad had been alive[4], I think I probably would have went to agriculture school or culinary school.

Laura also said, "My parents weren't the type to say go be class president. That just wasn't my parents, but with these guys, my own kids, I tell them, try it."

[4] Rexene was thirteen years old when her father passed away.

Some of the mothers wondered how things would have been different had they received educational support and encouragement from their parents. Vivian, who seemed to resent her parents' lack of foresight, tried not to blame them:

> My parents never really talked to us about college and going on. If my parents at the time knew how important college would be and to maybe talk me into at least the two-year college program, just sit down with me and show me my options, but again, it wasn't our lifestyle, you know? It's no one's fault, really. You know, I'm not blaming my parents.

It had not occurred to Vivian that her parents may not have known what options were available to their children.

2. Pushing and Supporting Daughters.

The lack of support from their own parents resulted in a conscious decision to support and push their own daughters to succeed. Rexene said, "I'm going to give them what I never had, so if they need the push, I'm going to give it." The mothers also discussed how they supported their daughters, now and in the future, by helping the daughters when necessary, providing encouragement when necessary, and, valuing their daughters' decisions.

a. Helping the Daughters.

Hannah and Laura provided examples of helping their daughters when they needed it. Laura said she told Leigh, "Your goals are my goals. Whatever your goals are, I'll help you 110%, but you have to tell me where you need the help. I will not do your homework for you. I'll advise you on your homework. I'll do whatever I can as far as getting you the materials you need; whatever it is I can physically do to help you, I'm there 110% and they know that when it comes to school." Hannah supported Lynn by obtaining information about colleges when she asked for it, "Well, I'm supportive of

her as much as possible. If she needs things for school, I provide that. I registered her for the scholarship thing, and she's got her own account there. And we've done college searches together. And we're, we're supposed to be doing some college visits here before too long. Basically whatever she's interested in."

b. Providing Encouragement.

Evidence of providing encouragement was exhibited by Vivian and Hannah, who said, "If she wants to join clubs, I support her in what she does." Vivian, however, combined support with pushing:

> I just kept talking to her about that and talking to her about that, encouraging her to do this, do that, whatever. She fought me most of the way and did things on her own, but I supported her. At least she knew where I stood and my reasoning behind it, and lo and behold, unbelievable, all of sudden she's doing, she's taking my advice and it's making sense to her, and she's feeling really good about it where it's almost encouraging her to even push herself even more.

c. Valuing Daughters' Decisions.

A final form of support was valuing their daughters' decisions with regard to their futures. Hannah said, "We'll support her in her decisions, which I think is important." Similarly, Vivian stated, "She knows I'm on the same page as her and that I'm right there to support her." While Jane, who reported limited discussions with Ryan about education, felt that Ryan was "a self-starter" and she "doesn't need pushing." In fact, Jane felt she did not provide Ryan much direction as "she doesn't leave room for direction," which exhibited Jane's level of confidence in Ryan's decisions.

3. Acknowledging Support.

The daughters' views on their mothers' support were divided into two categories: not recognizing or appreciating the support, and not wanting the support. Some of the daughters, despite their mothers' efforts, did not recognize their mothers'

attempts support or push them, but believed that their mothers would do so in the future. "I'm sure she'll be behind my back pushing to make sure I do the right thing," said Tricia. Some daughters, like Lynn, felt that their mothers' support was unnecessary as with her mother's push to get her involved in National Honor Society; Lynn said she "did it just because I wanted to." However, she later acknowledged that while she attained good grades, "I still think I would do fine if she wasn't constantly on me to do this and to do that. I guess I kind of get an attitude like whenever she starts to talk about something just because it annoys me, but I don't resist it, like usually I end up doing it anyway. In some cases it may be because I want to, and in some cases because I don't want her back riding anymore." Other daughters believed they did not need or want their mothers' push, while others believed that their goal of good grades was their own and not as a result of their mothers' pushing. As will be discussed in the next section, the daughters did not realize that their desire for good grades may have been as a result of an intergenerational message so ingrained that their goal was in fact not their own, but to use Vivian's term, "a seed dropped" for their benefit. It could be that the daughters' belief that the mothers help was minimal and their contradictory answers were because they are trying to distinguish themselves from their mothers' motives in an effort to become independent young adults.

4. Conclusion.

The mothers believed that their support and encouragement would push the daughters on the path toward a college degree and toward becoming like the successful *them*. The daughters' acknowledgement and appreciation for their mothers' support was mixed, with the mothers believing that they lent more effective support and

encouragement than they actually did, as will be further illustrated in the rest of this chapter. From the mothers not being pushed or supported by their own mothers to their pushing and supporting their own daughters, the phenomenon appeared to be the beginning of an intergenerational effect. This effect was clearest in Lynn's statement to her future daughter about education:

> I want my children to do well, but I'm not going to push them, like overly push them. For them to do something that they're comfortable with, so I'll make sure they do well in school. C's are acceptable. It is average, but they could do above average, then I would like for them to try it. I would support them and give them help if they wanted it, etc. (laughs) try not to do the things that I don't like my mother doing. I just don't like the way she's like 'do this, do this, do this,' like I'll help them and I'll give them advice but if it annoys them or something like that, I know that they could take care of it on their own, you don't have to do it, I'll see how it works, but I want them to do well.

With regard to why her mother pushes her, Lynn said, "She kind of wants me to have the whole thing she didn't get to do; that's why she push, push, pushes. She doesn't want me to miss out on opportunities."

B. Emphasizing Grades, Goals, and Extracurricular Activities

A consistent multigenerational message was *get good grades*. This message had been passed from maternal grandmothers to the mothers and from them to their daughters. In fact, the message *get good grades* was so internalized that when the teenagers in this study were asked if they had any messages for their future daughters, they all stated that they would tell their daughters to get good grades. For this generation's mothers, however, *pushing* the notion of good grades was tied directly to the attainment of success, which was coupled with pushing their daughters to make connections between their grades and future success, to get involved in extra-curricular activities, and to set goals.

1. Obtaining Good Grades.

While most of the mothers did not receive support or encouragement from their own mothers, nor did most recall conversations with their mothers about education and careers, they did recall their mothers' emphasis on getting *good grades*. Helga recalled that the only discussions with her mother about school were in response to Helga's having failed classes. "You'd better get those grades; you better buckle down," she was told. Rexene and Helga believed that their mothers were simply too busy with their marriages and raising children to show much interest in their daughters' education. Additionally, Helga pointed out that her generation, or time cohort, could have been a factor, "Back then that was the thing to do, you know? Girls got married either while they were still in high school or right out of high school." The sentiment that it was not assumed that their daughters would go to college or work to financially support a family was echoed by several of the mothers. Helga also pointed out that the mothers may simply not have been listening to discussions about their futures: "Not that I remember and I was listening. (laughs) Oh, what do they know, you know?" While the grandmothers had relayed the message that good grades were important, connections were not made between grades and future opportunities, which may be a result of the lack of opportunities during their daughters' time cohort, disinterest in theirs or their daughters' part, or the grandmothers' lack of knowledge. For the grandmothers' generation, from a working-class perspective, good grades may have been evidence of their daughters being able to fit into society (Grimes & Morris, 1997).

While the message *get good grades* may have been the continuation of an intergenerational message, the generation of mothers in this study believed that the road to

success would be paved by an education and that their daughters' successful start on this road began with getting good grades. Good grades, they theorized, would lead to scholarships and a college education, which were necessary to obtain a good job with good pay, which would result in a comfortable lifestyle for their daughters. Other messages closely tied with the message *get good grades* were the mothers' beliefs that good grades were a reflection of personal effort, a reflection of personal ability, a symbol of success, and necessary for success. Additionally, it was noted that some of the mothers intentionally made connections between good grades and their daughters' future success.

a. Reflecting Personal Effort.

Good grades were viewed as a reflection of personal effort. "If they get bad grades, I know that it's because they didn't apply themselves," said Hannah. Vivian referred to her own experience of not "applying myself and not getting the better grades" because she was "boy crazy" in high school. As a result, Vivian explained to her daughter why grades should be important to her, "If you don't apply yourself, you're shortchanging yourself, nobody else." At least two of the daughters had internalized this relationship between personal effort and grades. Leigh mentioned not getting good grades as a result of not studying, and Tricia had internalized her mother's message, "Effort is the key to everything; it's perseverance. Anybody can become a Doctor or anything, it all just takes effort, to learn the material, do your homework, do this, do that, more than half the people just don't put the effort into it because anybody could do it if they wanted to. That's what my mom's taught me a lot."

b. Reflecting Personal Ability.

Good grades were also viewed by the mothers as a reflection of personal ability, their own and their daughter's. Mothers Helga and Rexene believed that their own inability to get good grades was because they were not smart enough. "I don't think I'm smart enough," said Helga. "Maybe that's because of my poor grades. I don't know." Similarly, Laura stated, "I don't expect them to squeak by because I know she has potential." Mothers also applied that standard to their daughters, "While C's may be average, my daughter is capable of more," said Hannah, for whom C's were unacceptable. Unfortunately, the belief that poor grades were a reflection of poor effort or personal ability may also be why Nickita's failing grades in mathematics did not signal the need for testing for a possible learning disability. Nickita's mother believed her daughter was simply not working hard enough or was not smart enough, despite a reported family history of difficulty with math and spelling. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the messages that hard work always results in success may be limiting as poor grades are not always a reflection of poor effort.

c. Symbolizing Success.

Getting good grades was a symbol of success to all generations, but for the mothers in this study, the message *get good grades* also symbolized future success. As a result, the mothers made connections between good grades and opportunities for success, scholarships, and college acceptance. These connections were relayed to their daughters in the messages about the importance and necessity of good grades for their success. "I care about their grades. I care about what they do in school. I want them to excel. I want them to succeed," said Rexene.

d. Ensuring Future Success.

The mothers in this study made strong and frequent connections between good grades and the daughters' ability to be successful in obtaining scholarships and gaining entrance into college. In fact, the two ideas were tightly intertwined, almost as if one were not possible without the other and that one ensured the other. According to Laura, "If she's serious about college then she has to be serious about her grades. If she plans to apply for any kind of scholarships, she has to have at least B average grades, and that's what her student counselor also has said. So in order to apply for any of those scholarships, she has to at least be making good grades. It can't be just, I'm passing by the skin of my teeth kind of thing." Similarly, Rexene said, "She knows she needs to work hard. If she wants to get scholarships, she's got to work hard because no one is just going to give it to you. So, and she even says so, she gets her grades. We're hoping that with all her good grades that she gets some scholarships and that will help out." Helga said, "I think I've told her how important her grades are. If you want to get anywhere." Only Hannah understood how grades would affect her daughter's ability to be accepted into certain colleges, and she understood that Lynn needed higher grades if she wanted to get into the moderately selective colleges she hoped to attend. As a result of Lynn's grades, Hannah advised her, "So you want to look at a variety, if you apply to a moderately selective school, your grades would stand out. You'd have a better chance of getting really good academic scholarships."

In fact, their daughters' grades were important enough that two of the mothers had weighed the cost of their daughters obtaining part-time jobs and had concluded that attaining good grades was more important than work experience or extra spending

money. "I think she should get a job and work in her spare time, like weekends when she doesn't have much to do…but that way she has extra money, and like I said, right now, her school is more important. I don't want her to be stressed about her tests or her grades and then be working long hours or whatever, and then be tired, and then have her grades fall…then when you're in college same thing," said Rexene. The mothers' concerns have been confirmed by studies that found that children of low-income families were more likely to have part of full-time jobs and as a result have less energy and time for their studies (MacLennan, et al., 1983) and that adolescent employment interfered with school work (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986).

e. Making Connections Between Grades and Success.

The daughters absorbed their mothers' message that grades were important to their future success. "I have to stay in school and I have to get the best grades that I can if I want to go anywhere," said Nickita. The daughters also internalized their mothers' messages about grades and their connection to obtaining scholarships. Lynn said her mother is "very, very stubborn about my grades, she makes sure I'm doing well so I can get in[to] college with scholarships. If I do bad she'll like call, 'You're not going to get into college with that.'" Tricia also understood that her mother was "making the connection between my grades and college." For some daughters, however, the message *get good grades* may have been so internalized, as discussed earlier, they stated that achieving good grades was for their own satisfaction. Ryan said her mother is "proud of my grades. I get all A's. It's more my own standards. I get upset if I don't have A's." Likewise, Nickita believed that her mother "doesn't expect anything out of me. I expect it of myself."

In addition to adopting the intergenerational message of *get good grades* with their mothers' emphasis on attaining scholarships and gaining entrance into college, daughters gleaned a similar message from others (e.g., peers, guidance and admissions counselors, teachers). From an admissions counselor, Lynn learned that colleges "look at the grades and [they] see that the students are taking really hard classes in the beginning of high school and then their senior year they decide to slack off, [they] really don't like that. I was like oh, just keep loading up on the hard courses." From Marque's early conversations with upperclassmen, she also gleaned the effect of grades on college acceptance:

> I realized as a freshman I've got to keep my grades up because I realized a lot of people that I was friends with last year that were seniors, they all mature fast. They didn't try as hard their freshman year, sophomore year and they wanted to get into a good college. Well they didn't get accepted, and it bummed them out, but it's like that made me realize well, that shows that if that's one of the colleges I want to apply to, then that's the work you need to do.

Tricia, on the other hand, determined that she would not put as much effort into her grades and was pragmatic in her assessment that her grades were not good enough for ivy league colleges: "I don't want to do that much work (laughs), you know? Like I'll settle for a regular university but not something like that."

The multigenerational message *get good grades* is not specific to working-class mothers as other research found that working-class fathers also emphasized getting good grades (Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Sennett & Cobb, 1972). For the reasons discussed above (e.g., reflection of personal effort and ability, necessary for success), good grades may be a working-class message as a result of the working-class work ethic. Good grades may simultaneously be proof of hard work and an extension of the ethic that if you are going to do the work anyway, you might was well do it right.

2. Engaging in Extra-curricular Activities.

In addition to pushing daughters to *get good grades*, some mothers pushed their daughters to become involved in extra-curricular activities because they believed that the activities would benefit their daughters' applications for college. Vivian was the only mother who spoke about grades as being only one piece of what her daughter needed to get into college: "The big picture, how hard a worker you are, whether it be the grades and the courses that you've taken to your involvement in school as a whole extracurricularly [sic], your involvement in community, working a part-time job…it is for her to demonstrate to whoever she wants them to know what kinds of a well-rounded person you are." Vivian also said she got her message across by "dropping seeds," making examples of others (by bringing successful people to Tricia's attention), frequent conversations, and pushing Tricia to get involved in school activities and in class leadership. Vivian stated she began "harping" on Tricia in 6th grade to get A's and to begin thinking about what colleges wanted, what they looked for in college applications, and what she needed for scholarships because:

> That's how you're going to fit in. That's how you're going to be successful. I saw how much it affected me in a negative way and how it could have affected me in so many positive ways. I would harp on her a lot about it and she'd get sick of me telling her. I can honestly sleep at night knowing that I'm not pushing my kid beyond what she really wants to do, and she has really seen the benefit.

While Hannah did not mention such discussions with Lynn, Lynn reported that her mother pushed her to get involved with National Honor Society "so you can get into a good college, blah, blah, blah (laughs)." The latter is evidence that the mothers' pushing had a positive effect, as was Tricia's subsequent election as class president. These positive results contrasted with Smith's (1991) findings which suggested that

frequent mentioning of educational goals by parents resulted in a loss of effectiveness; however, Smith's study was conducted with families whose parents had college degrees and high status occupations.

3. Setting Goals.

Mothers also pushed their daughters to have goals for themselves. Laura spoke extensively about her daughter having goals, "We talk about the future. Where she's going to be in the next five years, where her friends are going to be in the next five years, the goals she's setting for herself, whether or not she's meeting those goals because she didn't do that this year, scholarships, we talk about that." In addition,

> As far as guiding her, I'm trying to guide her in a path that I not necessarily would take or someone else might not necessarily take, but a path that I think is going to be good for her, and that is to stay on track, set goals for yourself. These have to be your goals, not the goals I want you to have, but goals that you're going to set for yourself and that way you can monitor your own goals. If you're not fulfilling your goals, then this is something that you're going to have to work on and fix. I can't fix it for you because they're not my goals. She's getting older now, so she has to learn to set these goals for herself and not say, well, I'll just have my mother do it, kind of thing. And I think that's the way I can help guide her. That's the only way I can think of to do it for now, because she's at that teenage stage where nothing I say and nothing I do is right anyway kind of thing.

Just as Laura tied her daughters' goals back to the work ethic of being independent, Rexene included the work ethic of having worked hard to achieve, "Just being proud of them, knowing that they succeeded in their goals, and they got what they want, but they've worked for it. It was not just given to them, they've worked for it."

4. Conclusion.

Pushing their daughters to *get good grades*, to become involved in extra-curricular activities, and to set goals were forms of support provided by the mothers. This support, the mothers believed, would propel their daughters toward scholarships

and a college education, which they believed were prerequisites for success. What was missing, however, was the existence of procedural knowledge. As will be discussed in the next section, the nuts and bolts of how to help their daughters on the path toward success by choosing appropriate college preparatory courses, applying for scholarships, and gaining financing for and entrance into college were missing from the participants' knowledge base.

C. Procedural Knowledge

While the dominant message in this study was *be successful*, for which the participants believed a college education was necessary, the participants generally lacked knowledge of how to help their daughters proceed toward attaining the long-term success they desired. Specifically, they lacked knowledge about how to prepare for and obtain a college education. With one exception, the participants did not understand college entrance requirements or how to apply to and how to finance college. In addition, the participants had only vague notions of where to obtain needed information, and all but one mother was noticeably passive in helping her daughter to obtain information. One mother/daughter pair was significantly more knowledgeable than the others, and they will be presented in this section as a case study against which the knowledge and actions of the other pairs will be contrasted. This pair highlighted the effectiveness of the mother/daughter collaboration in preparing for college, and, as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, provided support for the argument in Chapter VI that the participants would benefit from positive role models and mentors. In this section, I will present a case study against which the other mothers will be contrasted. I will then present the participants' procedural knowledge regarding

resources and methods that were employed by the participants to research colleges, the sources of college financing considered by the participants, and their knowledge of the importance of high school course selection and grades.

1. Case Study.

The mother and daughter pair of Hannah and Lynn were an example of a successful role modeling and mentoring relationship and was an anomaly in this study because they had more sophisticated knowledge of college entrance requirements and processes for obtaining financing and applying for college. This level of knowledge may have been as a result of two sources of pre-existing procedural knowledge other participants did not possess. First, Hannah's mother was one of only two grandmothers in this study who held a college degree, specifically a graduate degree. Second, at the time of the interviews, Hannah was herself in college. Additionally, Lynn was one of a few of the daughters who participated in a high school guidance course that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. These facts may have contributed to the higher level of procedural knowledge exhibited by this pair, which was in stark contrast to the other participants. Therefore, the collaboration between Hannah and Lynn, combined with some pre-existing knowledge, made a significant difference in the attainment of procedural knowledge.

Hannah and Lynn were the most collaborative of the mother/daughter pairs and the most active in their college research. Hannah said,

> We've had discussions about it. We're planning college visits, we've found a bunch of the web-sites and looked at different colleges and we've talked about what would be good places to apply to and what may be your best choice. [I] helped narrow down her list and the places that she wants to visit because she wants to do her visits this year so she can make application next year.

Both were aware that the "selective" schools in which Lynn was interested were too expensive, and Hannah felt that Lynn's grades would positively stand out with "moderately selective schools," which they believed would improve her chances for scholarships and admission. If they needed help, Hannah referred to several resources:

> She's got her guidance counselors, who do have information and who can give information, plus her principal is a friend of mine, I know her and she would have information, plus, you know my own instructors and people that I talk to. Financial aid wise, I have an awesome financial aid lady, so you know, she's a really big source of information.

Hannah and Lynn also exhibited a high level of sophistication when speaking about schools' selectivity ranking (e.g., moderate, selective), schools' sports division rankings (division 1, 2, or 3), and "reach schools" (schools whose standards are slightly higher than Lynn's qualifications).

Surprisingly, despite this high level of collaboration and Hannah's belief that she supported Lynn as much as possible, when asked directly if her mother was helping her decide on a college Lynn's answers were conflicting, ranging from her mother not being involved to her mother being the only one involved:

> Not really her doing things to help me, like she'll say oh you should go talk to your counselor about this or you should go take care of this or maybe like, she's the one who had me take the PSAT's, I didn't plan on taking them but she was like oh, you should take the PSAT's. Mostly it's like, oh you should do this, this, or this. So that's kind of her role in it. She kind of tells me what to do to go in the direction.

On the other hand, Lynn said that her mother told her "to do well, stay focused, take it seriously, which I do, but probably not as seriously as she kind of tells me what to do to go in the direction so that's her role in it." Lynn also mentioned how her mother helped

her look up colleges on FastWeb[5] (2005), helped her determine a major, and helped her to narrow her choices. When asked if she had spoken with any other family members about college, she replied, "My mom's the only one that plays a big part in that." Since Lynn knew to limit her college choices based on her SAT scores, those discussions must have occurred with her mother as none of the other daughters mentioned the relationship between SAT scores and college entrance requirements.

Lynn was also the most knowledgeable daughter on the topic of financial aid. In fact, she was the only daughter who mentioned her "financial aid package," which may be as a result of her mother's college experience: "When I start applying I'll find out, like I'll see which ones give me the best package." As with the other daughters, however, her knowledge of cost was equally as naïve. Despite the amount of research she had done, Lynn believed that college cost $100 per credit for a three-credit course. As with the other daughters, she hoped she would receive scholarships:

> I think I'd get a lot in scholarship money. Or scholarships, financial aid or what not. I don't know, cost is kind of, I'm trying not to pick the colleges on cost. I want to just go to one that I really like and that offers what I want. I don't want to pick it based on cost, but it does play in because I can't go to like a $40k school. I'll be in student loan debt for the next 50 years, but yeah, I'll have to take out student loans definitely…cost really doesn't have a big play in it because I just want to go to a school I like.

In addition to knowledge of college entrance requirements and financing, Lynn's mother had the foresight to discuss with her daughter the relationship between different college degrees, the occupations that could follow, and the resulting income. Lynn said that her mother told her "you don't want to spend *x* amount of years on

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[5] FastWeb is a web-based scholarship and information service to which prospective college students register to both research and receive information on colleges and scholarships (FastWeb 2005).

something that doesn't pay enough money." This was the only pair that indicated they had given thought to the costs versus benefits of specific college majors and careers.

Because of their sophisticated knowledge base, this mother/daughter pair were significantly more knowledgeable about how to prepare for, gain entrance into, and finance a college education. Hannah's successful role modeling and mentoring of her daughter was in stark contrast to the other pairs, who seemed passive in comparison, as will be discussed in the next section.

2. Passivity of Other Mothers.

Hannah's level of procedural knowledge was significantly higher than the other mothers in the study, who were generally passive about obtaining information for their daughters about college preparation, scholarships, and college entrance requirements. With the exception of Hannah and Jane, the passivity exhibited by the other mothers may be intergenerational and may be a result of the mothers' and grandmothers' lack of experience with post-secondary education. Three reasons for the mothers' passivity were identified: 1.) daughters should figure it out on their own; 2.) daughters should make their own decisions; and 3.) mothers' own lack of knowledge and/or confidence, which included the hope that someone would help their daughters. Some categories of passivity were based partly on their work ethic, but all were based on hope, the mothers' hope that it would all work out for the best.

a. Figuring It Out On Their Own.

One type of passivity identified in this study was a result of the working-class work ethic that you must be independent and do things for yourself, presumably because no one else was going to do it for you, and you could not rely on the help of others. The

mothers believed that their daughters should figure it out on their own because it would be good for them to do so. Rexene told her daughter to research colleges and, if that was what she wanted to do, she should go to her guidance counselor. Vivian felt Tricia should take charge and pursue the knowledge on her own, "You have to go to [guidance] otherwise it's not going to happen. You have to be in control of your destiny. It's your education; it's your future, and you advocate for yourself." Helga felt because the process was not easy for her and her sisters, that "it isn't going to come easy for [Nickita] either." Helga wondered aloud, "Maybe I'm a bad mother for that; I don't know. Things come easier for some people than they do for others and it wasn't easy for me." Rexene said of her daughter, "She'll make the right decision, I'm sure there'll be disagreements, but in the long run I'm hoping that she'll make the right decision. I mean I can't walk her through life forever. She'll have to figure out things for herself, and I think going to college will be a good experience."

Believing that their daughters must figure it out own their own may be one reason why so few home-based activities had been done to prepare daughters for college. A few of the pairs mentioned that they visited one or two colleges or that they would in the near future, although the latter response may have been as a result of the interviews. However, the mothers felt that they would be more helpful in the future. According to Rexene, she would help Marque check on colleges when it came time as she did not want her to pick a college just because that was where her friend was going. She wanted to be sure that Marque chose a good, safe school and said, "I'm not saying one college is better than the other, but if she's Harvard material, why go to UMass-Amherst?". Rexene expected that they will "be driving around, checking out the

colleges, maybe talking to counselors and stuff, finding what's good for her, what she wants to do and what would challenge her and excite her."

b. Making Their Own Decisions.

Laura and Helga believed that their daughters must make their own decisions. As a result, Laura was often reluctant to give her opinions so Leigh would not blame her mother if it was the wrong decision: "I do like to try and have her make her own decisions, because sometimes if she wants me to make the decision for her and then it doesn't turn out right, well you're the one that made me do that or made that decision for me." When I asked Helga if she was helping Nickita prepare for college, she said, "I try [to be involved], but I don't want to be interfering....So maybe I don't ask enough questions because I feel like I'm...I don't want to interfere. I don't want her to think I'm nagging...I know she's doing the best she can, and that's all I expect her to do. I mean if she does better than that, hey super, but I don't want to put a lot of pressure on her."

Pushing daughters to make their own decisions included some mothers not sharing with their daughters information or opinions about their daughters' educational future. Two of the mothers believed that they understood the pros and cons of certain educational decisions faced by their daughters and assumed that their daughters did as well. Helga reported having spoken with Nickita about improving her math skills, but concluded, "I don't think I told her the consequences [of not taking another math or improving her math skills]. She may not even realize that. I don't know." When asked whether she preferred Leigh attend a particular high school, Laura admitted that she preferred her daughter stay in the traditional high school rather than the technical school as it would help her with college; however, Laura did not feel she could voice that

opinion to her daughter. Later in the interviews, when asked if she thought her daughter understood why the high school curriculum would be more beneficial for her daughter, she thought for a moment and replied:

> She probably doesn't, and I know I need to speak with her about that, because I really didn't think about it until now, but I know I need to definitely talk to her about that. Rather than just saying to her, it has to be your decision, I have to tell her why it has to be her decision, and like you said, the difference between the two schools. I think that's important.

c. Lacking Knowledge/Confidence.

The mothers' lack of knowledge and or confidence was another reason for the mothers' passivity as some admitted they neither had the information their daughters needed nor knew where to obtain it. Helga acknowledged that "mommy doesn't have all of the answers, and I would hope that the guidance counselor would have the answers for her…if she's asking the right questions, I don't know." Jane later asked, "When do college apps go out?" The mothers' awareness of what resources they would use to assist their daughters was vague. Rexene admitted, "I'm not sure. I'm not really sure. I guess she can check into things." Tizard, et. al. (1981) also found that low-income parents were lacking knowledge and self-confidence and, therefore, had not held conversations with their adolescents about post-secondary education.

The mothers' lack of confidence was also evident in their hope that someone else would step forward to guide their daughters. Those "someones" included family members, family friends, teachers, and guidance counselors. Rexene typified the mothers' hope that someone else would help her daughter. She tentatively stated, "Well, probably [Marque's cousin] because, you know, or Amy's husband is very, very intelligent. She's had a lot of college education under her…so they would lead her the

right way and tell her, you know...." Rexene also mentioned Marque's teachers, "I'm sure between now and the time she graduates, I'm sure there'll be a teacher or teachers that will give her a push where they think she should go, not lead her the wrong way." Since many of the stepfathers held associate's degrees, they were frequent sources for information. "I know her stepfather will probably check into things for her, some college and things that are there," said Rexene.

Wondering whether lack of opportunity to pose questions to people who possess the knowledge they needed may have been a barrier, I asked Rexene whether she had any questions that she would like to ask about the process. Her response further supported the notions that she lacked knowledge and that Marque would figure it out:

> No, any questions, no. I don't really know much about college, but I'm sure Marque will fill me in on that. She'll be coming home with all kinds of information and things, and when she does, I'll go through it and just like she does when she picks her courses for the following year. We'll sit down and she'll explain to me what they are and what they consist of. You know, do you think I can do it? If she feels strongly that she can, then do it.

3. Resources and Methods.

The participants in this study identified a range of resources and methods for obtaining procedural knowledge and used three primary methods to research colleges and college requirements. Resources identified were web-based research, school-based and extra-curricular activities, and person-based resources such as family members, family friends, peers, and occasionally teachers and guidance counselors. However, while these resources were identified and many had been used by the daughters, they had not been used by the mothers. Jane said that Ryan's college search would

"probably start with the library, then searching the web, and then asking "people we know and go on from there."

a. Web-based Research.

Web-based research was the preferred research method used by the daughters, perhaps because all of the daughters had computers in the home; however, with the exception of Hannah, the mothers had not conducted on-line research. The search engine most cited by the daughters was FastWeb (2005), on which participants registered to research colleges and scholarships.

At the time of the interviews, all but one daughter had researched colleges online, which included virtual campus tours, extracurricular activities, courses, and admissions requirements, usually in that order. Marque said that she

> …went onto some college web-sites and I tried to find web-sites and I researched like the different like courses that they held, the campuses and stuff like that. I do that in my free time. I'm curious what they offer what they hold for classes that are available to take. UMass you need 16, I guess, college prep courses. So I'm looking to make sure, I'm hoping to have more than that, and I know that, I guess colleges like they like extracurricular activities, courses on your things [sic] and stuff like that.

Despite the daughters' research, they were still confused about college entrance requirements, costs, and application processes. Many of the daughters still guessed at the length of college programs (e.g., 10-11 years for beauty school[6], four or more years for nursing school). Similarly most either did not know or guessed at minimum entrance requirements for their first choice college. "I know you need at least a 3.0 [grade point average]. That's what I heard, but you can do recommendations and stuff. I think you have to have two foreign languages or like two years in a foreign language.

I think that's all I've heard so far," said Nickita, while Marque said, "We have PSAT's next year. So I'm hoping that, I'm probably going to buy the book that they have so I know like what I need to study for to help me. So I'm going to get a good grade on that." Nickita did not know the minimum SAT scores required by her first choice college, "I've requested information, but it hasn't come yet." In contrast with Hannah and Lynn, none of the other participants understood the selectivity of colleges (e.g., moderately selective, highly selective).

b. School-based Resources.

While the mothers had not used any of school-based options, the daughters had used guidance counselors, guidance class, teachers, and college fairs to obtain information, despite their conflicting statements of not having done so. In fact, some of the daughters felt that it was too early to be talking about colleges and careers with guidance counselors and that the process would begin in a year or two. However, a few of the daughters had had preliminary conversations with their guidance counselors and knew that when they were ready for information that the counselors would help them get pamphlets and catalogues. Lisa and Leigh had spoken with their guidance counselors about their fields of interest, cosmetology and law, respectively. In fact, Leigh, who had just completed the ninth grade and who admitted she had given little thought to the process of applying to college, must have spoken with her guidance counselor as she was told that she could not complete her college applications until her junior year. Other daughters said that in the future they intended to speak with their

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[6] Lisa believed that beauty school was a college education and that it took as much as 10-11 years to complete.

guidance counselors and teachers about college. Marque, who frequently sought advice from teachers and guidance counselors, said, "you can always go to a teacher and they'll help you out if you need help."

Some of the daughters attended a high school that mandated a class called "guidance" in which they explored careers, wrote resumes, practiced interviewing for jobs, and researched careers, pay, and level and type of education needed in addition to looking at the cost of colleges and related expenses from a practical perspective (rent, phone, electricity, etc.). Since many of the daughters participated in the guidance course and several began researching college options on their own, often the daughters had clearer ideas about how they were going to proceed than did their mothers. Some of the daughters, however, stated that they had never spoken with a guidance counselor outside of their guidance course. When asked if she had consulted with her guidance counselor, Nickita replied, "Not yet, but we have done it as a class." It is also important to note that while Lynn was one of the daughters that had participated in the guidance course, other daughters who also participated in the course were not as knowledgeable, again, supporting the importance of the mother/daughter collaboration.

In addition to their guidance class, a few of the daughters had been exposed to career and educational options outside of school. Marque participated in a junior high job fair with mock interviews, and Tricia attended a career fair. Ryan was the most active in this regard as she was involved in two organizations that provided introductions to careers (Girl Scouts) and opportunities to learn leadership and networking skills (International Order of Rainbow Girls).

c. Person-based Resources.

Six person-based resources were identified: mothers, family members, peers, and, occasionally, family friends, professionals, and teachers and guidance counselors.

i. Mothers. After the World Wide Web, as discussed earlier, the most frequent source of information cited by the daughters was talking with their mothers, closely followed by conversations with other family members and the daughters' peers. All of the daughters mentioned speaking with their mothers about education; however, just as with Lynn, when asked about their mothers' involvement in their preparation for college, most of the daughters felt that their mothers were not very involved. Despite the daughters' perception of lack of involvement, many of the daughters believed that their mothers would be involved in the future. Tricia said that her mother is not involved "yet, but she's sure she will be involved." Ryan said her mother would probably take her to visit colleges, and with a laugh, said she "expects mother to call colleges to get paperwork" for her. Marque said of her mother's involvement:

> Kind of yeah, I was like, you can't really ask much about classes because like, because she doesn't know. Like she's never gone to college or anything like that. So she doesn't know what they offer, but she just tells me research [it] and if that's what you want to do, go to your guidance counselor. I'll sit down and talk with my dad about it. That I want to go to college and how, I want to do something…and he was telling me just try to get an internship or do something, where you can get research onto it and maybe…sometimes research is just telling you you're not actually getting into seeing what they do. So maybe going and talking with people that do that to get their aspect [sic] on it and see how they like it, how they feel with the stress level and all that, how the environment of the work is and stuff.

Regarding her mother's role in helping her prepare for college, Ryan said, "I wish she'd help me look at the information and get me more information."

ii. Family Members. Both immediate and extended family members were considered sources of information about education. Conversations with family members about education ranged from Ryan who intended to speak with her family members, to those who had done so, to one daughter who hoped her family would support her when she needed them. Lisa had discussed the possibility of beauty school, which she believed was college, with her aunt and her grandmother, a hairdresser, and said she would speak with her stepfather, who had attended college. Nickita had spoken with a number of family members including her cousins who were attending college, her aunt who was an ultrasound technician, and her father who was an EMT. Tricia hoped that extended family members would support her should she need it, "Of course they're gonna help me, they're there to guide me and I know that if I ever, ever need anything, anyone of my family members, I know I can fall back, I know that they would all help me."

iii. Peers. The daughters frequently cited peers as sources of information about college, and several had begun networking with upperclassmen and college students. Nickita knew seniors who were going to her first choice college next year and had discussed possible classes with them. In fact, Marque based some decisions on what she perceived as mistakes made by upperclassmen. For example, her friends did not get good grades and did not get accepted in to colleges they wanted so she came to the following conclusion:

> Since I've been thinking about college for a long time, I realized as a freshman, I've got to keep my grades up because I realized a lot of people that I was friends with last year that were seniors, they all mature fast. They didn't try as hard their freshman year, sophomore year and they wanted to get into a good college. Well they didn't get accepted, and it bummed them out, but it's like that made me realize well, that shows that if that's one of the colleges I want to

> apply to, then that's the work you need to do. That's what I need to work towards, and that's the one I need to get into.

Peers were often viewed as resources for campus tours. "My friend's sister, she has a boyfriend down at Springfield, and I went down there with them, and looking at the campus, nice campus, nice college dorms…He talks about like their cost and stuff and stuff like that…I looked at Clark University," said Ashley. In fact, Jane recommended that her daughter "go up and see them and see how things are for [current college freshmen she met through swim team and math team]." In contrast to their daughters, none of the mothers mentioned their own peers as sources for information, presumably because the mothers' peers also lacked procedural knowledge.

iv. Family Friends. Family friends were occasionally identified as sources of information, but more often by the daughters than the mothers. Vivian reported that she talked with a number of people about options for her daughter, including her former supervisors (a banker and a school principal). "I'm tapping into resources like yourself. I asked you some questions, I'm really impressed that you're going for your doctorate," Vivian stated, although she never consulted me as a resource. Despite having a family of college graduates, Jane never mentioned tapping them as resources. Ryan and Marque had discussed college and career plans with their parents' friends and Marque spoke with the daughter from a friend of the family, "She's a cosmetologist, and I talked to her about that and how much you'd make and how fun it is and if she's interested." Marque also considered speaking with a friend of the family who was a lawyer.

v. Professionals. Only two of the daughters mentioned the possibility of speaking with someone in their field of interest. Marque stated that she would speak with the

school nurse about nursing, and Leigh decided that she should also speak with a lawyer, "Probably like the courthouse or something, like go and talk to them and see where I could get info about it and what schools I need to go to," and to see what high school courses would help her prepare for law school. The infrequency with which participants consulted with professionals in their chosen fields of study is supported by other studies that have identified the lack of access to professionals in working-class communities (Dews & Law, 1995; Grimes & Morris, 1997; Ryan & Sackrey, 1984; Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993). In fact, Grimes and Morris concluded that students from working-class backgrounds are less likely to be exposed to professional role models and "possess marginal information about the 'ins' and 'outs' of higher education" (Grimes & Morris, 1997, p. 115). In working-class communities, access to persons with professional training is typically, if not solely, through professional relationships (e.g., doctor or dentist appointments, legal consultations) as opposed to the middle- and upper-classes in which parents, relatives, and family friends are themselves educated professionals and therefore more accessible.

vi. Teachers and Guidance Counselors. Despite the fact that all but one of the daughters were in their sophomore and junior years of high school at the time of the interviews, the most obvious sources of information, high school teachers and guidance counselors, had not been tapped by the mothers. Rather than approaching Marque's teachers herself, as quoted earlier, Rexene hoped that someone would step forward and help her daughter. Despite the fact that her daughter is clearly searching for information, Vivian stated, "I haven't talked with the school guidance counselor, but will be if not this summer but definitely in the fall because it's her junior year, and here

we go." As Vivian pointed out, "on her own, talking with her guidance counselor, [she] was able to go with the juniors last year to a college fair…she really wanted to go, and this is all on her own. I mean just that she's looking for this information and she has information coming in, being mailed to her, and that she's going on-line requesting information from different colleges." Similarly, Rexene didn't "feel that there's any real reason to talk to the guidance counselor because I know she's a good student, and she tries," not viewing the guidance counselor as a source of information about college.

4. College Financing.

The mothers' passivity was most noticeable with regard to their minimal awareness of how to help their daughters finance college. Most of the mothers had not determined college costs, methods of financing, or the processes for applying for financial aid or scholarships. In fact, it appeared that the participants purposely avoided the issue of college costs, once again relying on the hope that it would all work out. Jane did not know how they were going to pay for Ryan's college, despite the fact that she grew up in a household where "There was a kind of an attitude of saving for college, that things we wouldn't necessarily spend now with that expense coming up" and the fact that she, her parents, and her siblings were all college graduates. Jane wondered about the marketability of smartness based on a relative's ability to negotiate financing with colleges and admitted that this was something new to her that she "didn't pay attention to" and that it was "beyond me." Based on their experiences, however, the participants had determined four methods of assisting with college financing: 1.) allowing the daughters to live at home while attending college, 2.) having their ex-husband contribute toward expenses, 3.) obtaining scholarships, and 4.) miscellaneous methods.

a. Living At Home.

While the mothers admitted they did not know the costs associated with college attendance and had not thought about methods to help their daughters finance college, a few mothers identified some cost-saving strategies. Included in Rexene's guesses about college costs was the strategy of allowing her daughter live at home and commute to college: "We can just kind of guess. I don't know. I don't know if she wants to live there. Usually the first year maybe they even commute. I don't know. And then I worry about the commute, traveling...you have to weigh out the pros and cons...Whatever she decides." Helga recommended that Nickita live at home and attend community college before going to the university because it was less expensive. Rubin (1976) found "most assume that the only help they'll give their children will be to let them live at home without cost. The rest, the children will have to do for themselves—an attitude that rests not on their callousness or their unwillingness to help, but on their conviction that to give the children more, even were it possible, would be to spoil them, to encourage them to take the opportunity lightly..." (p. 208). There was no evidence in this study that helping their daughters would be seen as spoiling them. Rather, the mothers' passivity appeared to stem from the working class ethic that the daughters need to do this on their own and make their own choices, which may have simply been masking the mothers' discomfort of not knowing how to help their children. It should be noted, however, that allowing their daughters to live at home while attending college would both allow the mothers to feel as though they were helping with their daughters' education and would allow the mothers to preserve their mother/daughter relationship.

b. Contributing Fathers.

Another financing strategy considered by the mothers was having the girls' fathers contribute toward college costs. While Vivian and Helga admitted that they had not "thought about financing yet," they both hoped that the girls' fathers would help. Helga admitted that it "will be another court battle." Vivian reported that it already had been a court battle, "[W]e did go to court as part of the agreement we got on paper. He agreed to it. We wrote it down, and we both signed it, and the judge approved it that he has to pay half of college tuition. So for the first time I'm going to expect him to pay for half the college education." Despite the agreement, however, Vivian's daughter was more pragmatic, "I know my dad won't be able to help us out financially."

The daughters' knowledge about college costs and financing were just as vague as their mothers'. Most of the daughters did not know the cost of tuition, and none had considered additional costs such as books and living expenses. Nickita typified the daughters' vague understanding of the cost of college as she believed that UMass was cheap compared to Smith and Amherst Colleges (a local ivy-league and a local highly selective college, respectively), and admitted that she did not know how she would pay for college. Ryan joked that she would like her mother to pay the bills. Marque hoped her parents would

> …help me pay for some of it. I'm hoping that in time I'll be able to pay them back because I know that UMass is probably not the cheapest school, you know…two-year college or some of the other colleges, but since I really want to go there, I'm hoping they'll maybe help with some of it but that I'll be able to, I'll take student loans out and then be able to pay them back and the student loans back (laughs).

c. Obtaining Scholarships.

Scholarships were another avenue of hope as both mothers and daughters placed a high degree of emphasis on obtaining scholarships, yet, with the exception of Lynn, none had researched what scholarships were available or how to apply. "We're hoping that with all her good grades that she gets some scholarships and that will help out," said Rexene. Helga hoped "that with scholarships and things like that we can get her through." At least one mother believed that the "poorer you are, the more financial help you get, which is definitely helping me because I'm going to make sure we have our home equity loan already out for a garage so that on paper, no we can't afford college; help us out and not make me use my equity for college instead of my garage,"[7] said Vivian. As mentioned earlier, Hannah was the only mother who mentioned a financial aid package.

Like their mothers, the daughters also placed the dream of a college education on the hope of obtaining scholarships. Even though Leigh was the farthest away from going to college, she, too, hoped for scholarships and put a lot of stock in what may have been an offhanded comment by her volleyball coach who "told me I could get a scholarship through it if I play every single year. I love that idea." Leigh's mother also held out hope for scholarships, but realized that Leigh's grades would impact her eligibility:

> As far as college, by the time she graduates, college tuition is going to be outrageous. She plans to apply for any kind of scholarships. She has to have at least B average grades, and that's what her student counselor also has said. So in order to apply for any of those scholarships, she has to at least be making good grades. It can't be just, I'm passing by the skin of my teeth kind of thing.

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[7] Vivian believed her husband, Tricia's step-father, would not contribute financially toward Tricia's college education. She appeared to be torn between her husband's desire for a garage and her own desire for her daughter to have a college education and therefore believed this was a valid compromise.

d. Miscellaneous Methods.

In addition to scholarship money, Tricia hoped her extended family would help with financing college:

> I know my parents, my mother and stepfather are going to try to do as much as they can, and then I've got what my grandfather saved up for me, which might be a couple hundred more by the time I get to college…my relatives…they might help out. I'm going to probably apply for as much scholarships as I can, you know, just a couple hundred dollars here and there. Um, and then financial aid, student loans, and stuff. So hopefully they'll all come together to make up enough.

Since Tricia was the only daughter working a steady job, I asked if she was saving for college, "Not really [saving] for college because a car's gonna' come before college, but whatever I would have left over by the time I graduate, sure, I can use that."

Lynn, Marque, and Ryan had more realistic expectations about the cost of college, with Lynn and Ryan being the most savvy about ways to pay for it. Marque participated in an activity in junior high school where they compared the cost of 2-year v. 4-year state colleges so she knew approximately the cost and wanted a job "to help pay for college." She had given additional thought on how to defray costs and hoped she would "stay [home] if I can. If I'm staying in Massachusetts for college so you don't travel that far back and forth." Nickita also discussed getting a job to help pay for college expenses, "I'll try and get grants, scholarships, kind of make it less expensive. I'll have to get a job this summer and that will help out. So I try to make it less expensive as much as possible." Ryan's recommendation to pay for college once she graduates included Teach for America.

The lack of knowledge about financing college supports Rubin's findings in her landmark study of nearly thirty years ago in which 20% of the participants wanted their

kids to go to college. "It becomes clear that few working-class parents have any real idea about the cost of a college education—most guessing it to be "maybe a few hundred dollars a year or so" (Rubin, 1976, p. 207).

5. Course Selection and Grades.

While all participants agreed that good grades are important to future success, there was little understanding that course selection was as important as grades, and that colleges view good grades in less difficult courses differently than average grades in more difficult courses. In fact, there was little consultation with knowledgeable others (e.g., teachers, guidance counselors, or others with college experience) about course selections.

a. Selecting Courses.

Hannah and Vivian were the only two mothers who spoke about the relationship between high school coursework and college acceptance. Vivian stated, "The harder the courses you take, the better your chance of getting accepted into a college with scholarship money" and felt that Tricia was taking her advice since her daughter would take both honors and Advanced Placement (AP)[8] courses the following year. Many of the daughters also had only a vague notion about how high school courses would help prepare them for college, and, yet, most of the daughters had taken or were planning to take honors or AP courses. Other than believing these courses will "look good" on a college application, they did not know how the courses would help prepare their daughters for college, their effect on college admissions, or their help in fulfilling college requirements, as with AP courses. This was also true of Lynn, despite the tremendous

help received by her mother with regard to college preparation and the help of her guidance counselors in selecting college preparation courses. Lynn knew that AP courses would be helpful, but she was unsure how or why.

b. Consulting with Knowledgeable Others.

With few exceptions, high school courses were chosen with little research or consultation with knowledgeable others, such as teachers and guidance counselors, or those with college experience. However, when authorities were consulted, there was still little understanding of why particular course selections were preferred over others. Tricia, who had some help from her guidance counselor, felt "They're adults and I kind of have to take their word for it [that these are the right courses]." Marque and Lynn said they sought out their guidance counselors frequently. Lynn said,

> I talk to my counselor a lot just because I remember when I set up all the courses that I needed to graduate, the ones that were going to help me get a head start for my degree. Besides like prep stuff for post graduation, they kind of help you with career choices, they help you figure out what to do with a career if you don't know already, I don't know, mostly it's just like after you graduate. Like if you know what you want to do, they'll help you in that stuff. If you don't know, they'll help you figure it out.

While some of the daughters mentioned speaking with guidance counselors about course choices, most of the daughters relied on input from their mothers, stepfathers, some of whom had associate's degrees, and other family members, but rarely from those with college experience. Nickita was an exception as she took the advice of a cousin in graduate school about what would help her in college: "So like I told him I want to be a doctor. I'll major in Biology; what should I take now? So he

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[8] Advanced Placement courses are college-level courses offered within high schools that allow students to take Advanced Placement examinations through which they have the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at most U.S. colleges (College Board, 2004).

told me to take Anatomy and Physiology, which I was thinking of doing, but he just confirmed it."

The mothers said they helped their daughters with their coursework and course selections, but the discussions around coursework did not appear to be substantive or informed. Helga said, "I try to get her to take the easier classes so she doesn't put so much pressure on herself. I know she hates math, you know. I try to tell her if you want to be a doctor, you're going to need to know Latin, so maybe you should take Latin instead of French, but she always ends up taking what she wants anyway." Rexene wanted Marque to choose courses in which she can be successful, "Like I always tell her, you know, try something easy. If it's a breeze, then you know you can do it and go up to the next step." However, some of the mothers admitted that they were unable to help with their daughters' course choices while some of the daughters, like Marque, did not believe that their mothers' assistance was helpful: "I was like, you can't really ask much about classes because like, well, how would this class be, because she doesn't know. So she doesn't know what they offer, but she just tells me, research [it] and if that's what you want go to your guidance counselor." Or, Nickita, who wanted to become a pediatrician, did not find her mother's help particularly useful when she recommended that Nickita "take Latin because doctors use mainly Latin terms" and that Nickita should "just try it" to see if she likes different classes.

6. Conclusion.

In this chapter I presented how mothers pushed and supported their daughters toward success; emphasized grades, setting goals, and involvement in extra curricular activities; and lacked the procedural knowledge to effectively assist their daughters

toward their mutual goal of success. This analysis revealed that participants saw education as a means to a better standard of living without understanding how to prepare for, gain entrance into, or finance a post-secondary education. The participants also did not understand how the educational system itself worked and how education can lead to a career that improves their standard of living. The implicit assumption, however, appeared to be that any career obtained as a result of a college education would be a better standard of living. "Now I'm a single mother and I know if I want to get anywhere in this world you need to have that education," stated Helga. There was also no evidence in this study that any of the participants, including Hannah and Lynn, had discussed the long-term implications of school loans and interest payments, or the long-term implications of having an education on Lynn's future earning potential.

All but one of the mothers in this study exhibited a high degree of passivity for which there may have been several reasons. Mothers may have recognized their lack of knowledge and may have been fearful that they would give the wrong advice; therefore, they felt more comfortable with their daughters taking the advice of others. Mothers may have also been concerned that they might jeopardize their mother/daughter relationship. In addition, the mothers' passivity may have also been a result of the work ethic that daughters must figure it out for themselves and that they could not rely on the help of others.

This study also revealed that daughters were more proactive than mothers in researching and obtaining information about college, which could be because some of the daughters had determined at a very young age that they were going to attend college, such as Marque who wanted to go to college since she was in second or third grade.

Lynn, "I've always wanted to go to college. There's no if's, and's, or but's, like I wouldn't ever consider not going to college." The daughters' proactiveness may also be a result of the school-based guidance course, or as a result of the mothers' messages that they must obtain a college education.

In the next chapter, I will set forth the contradictions among and between the messages and the need for positive role models and mentors.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS: CONTRADICTIONS AND THE NEED FOR POSITIVE ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

> No matter how far we travel, we can never leave our roots behind. (Rubin, 1976, p. 13)

The previous two chapters set forth the findings of the messages conveyed from mothers to their adolescent daughters about education, work, and success and the mechanisms through which those messages were conveyed. What emerged from the messages and methods were several contradictions, none of which were identified by the participants. Identifying the contradictions in the messages was enormously helpful for this study as they provided a lens through which the reader may view the purpose of role models and mentors in the lives of these participants. In this final chapter of findings, I will present the contradictions that emerged from the messages, and the participants' views on role models and mentors, which, combined with the lack of procedural knowledge exhibited by the majority of the participants, highlighted the need for positive role models and mentors.

A. Contradictory Messages

Within this study, several contradictions were identified between and within the messages of the working-class work ethic and the mothers' experiences as sole supporters, and what it meant to be successful. Also identified were contradictions should the daughters attain the desired success, and the social class implications as a result of their social mobility.

1. Contradictions of the Work Ethic.

There were several contradictions between the messages of the working-class work ethic. The most significant contradictions included the limitations of the work ethic, and, the contrast between the mothers' passivity and the work ethic.

a. Limitations of Work Ethic Messages.

The messages that transmitted the work ethic from one generation to the next simultaneously set a foundation for success, but may have also limited success and were, therefore, contradictory. The messages were *you can do whatever you set your mind to*, *you can achieve if only you work hard enough*, *you can do anything*, *hard work always pays off*, *do things yourself*, and *don't rely on others.* They were contradictory because they were empowering, yet limiting by setting unrealistic expectations, and were not always employed, or modeled, by the mothers themselves.

The intent of the mothers' messages *you can do whatever you set your mind to* and that *you can achieve if only you work hard enough* were motivational and empowering, yet they may have also been limiting by providing daughters with unrealistic expectations. For example, Vivian told her daughter that "effort will get great results. When you set your mind to it *you can do anything*. You can be anything." Another limitation is from the message that *hard work always pays off.* According to Tricia, her mother had told her that "Effort is the key to everything; it's perseverance. Anybody can become a doctor or anything, it all just takes effort, to learn the materials, do your homework, do this, do that, more than half the people just don't put the effort into it because anybody could do it if they wanted to, that's what my mom's taught me a lot." Messages such as these did not take into account that the

daughters may not have the intellect, skills, or interest to succeed on a given task or goal, despite great effort or other barriers that may have existed. The messages also assumed that the world was a meritocracy and that effort alone was sufficient for success.

Other messages intended to be empowering and motivational may also have been limiting. The messages *doing things yourself* and *not relying on others* were echoed by several of the daughters. Lynn stated simply that her mother "tries to stay involved [in Lynn's education] but I get a lot done on my own. I'm very independent and responsible," she said proudly. As discussed previously, Tricia was proud of a paternal uncle who put himself through college because "nobody helped him." When asked about possible role models and mentors, Nickita stated, "I don't know. I try to figure things out on my own as much as I should. You have to be independent." Her response illustrated how the internalized messages of the work ethic may have hindered the daughters' ability to seek out and obtain help from others when needed. In fact, some participants struggled unknowingly with these contradictory messages as evidenced by Tricia's statements, which simultaneously echoed her mother's messages:

> I want to do it myself so it's done the right way. I've got to be able to do everything for myself before I can do it for others. I have to get where I want to be by doing it myself; nothing's handed to you. You can't do it on your own. You need mentors, but you also have to be strong by yourself to get through it. I want to do it myself...because I like doing things myself because I know I'll get it done the right way, which I definitely get from my mother.

b. Mothers' Passivity.

The most striking tension between the mothers' messages regarding the working-class work ethic was the mothers' own passivity in helping their daughters to obtain information about college and scholarships. Their inaction and reliance on

"hope" were contrary to the very messages they imparted to their daughters (*work hard for what you want*, *you can do anything you set your mind to*). The mothers' passive reliance on the hope that it will all work out, however, simultaneously fits with and contradicts the work ethic that you have to do things for yourself. First, their inaction fits with the work ethic because they expect the daughters to make their own decisions and to figure it out on their own. At the same time, the mothers' passivity contradicts the notion that you have to work hard for what you want as the mothers clearly wanted their daughters to become successful and clearly wanted to obtain information about college for their daughters, yet the mothers did not actively seek out information.

According to Rubin (1976), "Whatever the mix, there's heartache in that realization and pain in knowing that their children probably won't be much better off than they. For under such circumstances, only the hardiest, the most ambitious, the most motivated toward some specific occupational goal will ever get through college. For the parents, however, there's some compensation as well: the reassurance that the children won't be lost to an alien way of life, a way of life that parents can't and don't want to understand" (p. 208). For many of the mothers in this study, their own lack of education leaves them little option to move out of unskilled and semi-skilled blue and pink collar jobs. In contrast to the women in Rubin's study, the mothers' hope for their daughters' success was abundant, but their action was not.

2. Contradictions of Attaining Success.

The messages *be successful* contained several contradictions. The daughters' attainment of success via breaking the cycle, becoming educated, and changing social

class may have several unintended consequences for all of their futures, which the participants had not considered.

a. Breaking the Cycle.

As discussed in Chapter V, the mothers pushed their daughters to become successful with the intention of breaking what they perceived to be an intergenerational cycle of family members who lacked education and lacked resources to live financially secure lives. The mothers' messages, which were fraught with contradictions, were threefold: 1.) "break the cycle" so you will not be like me, because I have made "mistakes;" 2.) "break the cycle" so you will not be like your "deadbeat dad;" and 3.) "break the cycle" so you will not be like others around us who "work in dead end jobs and sit on the neighborhood bar stools." The contradiction inherent in these messages is that the mothers wanted their daughters to be different than they, their family members, friends, and neighbors, a goal that the daughters were ready to achieve. It was not clear from the interviews whether the mothers grasped the fact that by becoming successful their daughters might leave their homes, communities, families, and friends. By virtue of their higher levels of education, the daughters may become what Grimes and Morris (1997) term "working-class expatriates." The daughters will have become socially mobile and thus no longer working-class, unlike their families, friends, and communities. This contradiction, however, may account for why none of the participants used the term "failures" when speaking of the unsuccessful *them*; by calling the unsuccessful failures, they would be referring to their mothers, families, and neighbors, and in the case of the mothers, themselves.

In addition to the above, another small contradiction worth noting was the mothers' tempering the message *be successful* with the caution to not be too successful. A few of the mothers said they did not require that the daughters be rich, just well off enough that they would not have to struggle as the mothers had. In fact, a few of the mothers joked that the daughters needed to make enough money to support their mothers in their old age. "Do good and make a lot of money so you can take care of me," quipped Rexene.

b. Becoming Educated.

The mothers did not consider that the attainment of success might also mean that their daughters would become like the educated people whom some mothers loathed and distrusted and whom other mothers found scary. The intergenerational phenomenon of the mothers' and grandmothers' negative characterizations about the educated presented in Chapter IV are congruent with Skeggs' (1997) findings in which the participants defended themselves from "put downs" by making fun of people whom they thought were better than they and Law's (1995) findings that those with the ability to move up in the class hierarchy adopted the dominant class's negative assessment of the working-class. During the interviews, participants' negative statements about educated people often began strongly, but their speech became cautious when they realized that they might offend me due to my level of education. This was the same reaction Luttrell (1984) experienced while interviewing her participants, who hesitated and became uncomfortable when they realized they may be speaking about the interviewer.

The obvious contradiction in the mothers wanting their daughters to become educated is that they will become like the very people of whom the mothers are afraid

and whom they distrust. This was also a finding in Sennett and Cobb (1972) in which one father felt threatened by his children, who were "turning out just the way I want them to be" (p. 19). Sennett and Cobb referred to this generational conflict as the "badge of ability;" the parents are able to provide their children with the opportunity to grow, develop, and stand out as individuals, an opportunity not available to the parents.

While the mothers wanted their daughters to become successful, the desire for them to become like the educated *them* was met with mixed emotions as many of the mothers did not always approve of educated persons and expressed resentment and distrust of people whom they felt were educated. Helga found educated people "scary," because they are "smarter than me. It makes me feel inferior." Educated people "have an attitude," said Helga. "They're knowledgeable. I guess it would depend on their personality too if they were an educated person. I mean you're an educated person but I don't think you're a smart-ass. Their mannerisms, the way they come across. If they have this attitude that they're holier than thou, I hate those people. My ex-husband was so flipping smart, and he's stupid, no common sense." Additionally, having too much education was seen as a detriment. Helga adds, "Sometimes the more you know can hurt you too. You know how it can be in some offices. You know too much they kick you out the door." Jane made a similar observation in that those with advanced degrees seemed to be the first laid off during hard times, presumably because they also made more money. The latter reason and the potential lack of cost-benefit of an advanced degree were reasons Jane cited for not having pursued a graduate degree.

Rexene struggled to describe educated persons:

> Someone who represents himself, independent, strong-willed, knows what they're doing, knows what they're talking about. I mean I've talked to a lot of

> people. They make themselves sound so educated or they think they know something, and they really don't. But who am I to say, hey, you're stupid. They don't know what they're talking about…I look at you and, you know, I mean but you're learning. You want to learn.

This was an intergenerational theme as Rexene told of her mother's not wanting to attend parents' night because "they're all stuck up." Rexene also noted that "it doesn't make you a better person to go to college." Hannah spoke in a similar fashion about not being able to "stand people who are condescending" when speaking about her teachers or her daughter's guidance counselors.

> Laura exhibited her opinion of educated people through her experiences at work: I wouldn't want to work [at the other location] only because, I believe some of the girls that work in one of their facilities are educated. The actual owner of all the companies does have like a personal assistant, and I know she's very educated. I don't know what her particular background is, but she did go to college, and I thought it was for finance, but I hear of nothing but problems with those girls. So I don't think I could work in that kind of a setting.

She also worked with someone who was a pre-law student and who was now doing kitchen designs; she shook her head at the fact that "what she originally went to college for has absolutely nothing to do with what she's doing," viewing college as vocational preparation. Laura also felt that employers were "paper-happy" because they looked for college experience, but felt that "worldly experience" should outweigh college.

The mothers' own educational and occupational experiences may have been why they did not like or trust those with an education. With only one exception, the mothers did not feel comfortable in school. Most attained average or below average grades and rarely participated in extracurricular activities. The cause for their discomfort was wide-ranging from Hannah's belief that teachers talked down to her, to Vivian's belief that

school catered to "stats,"[9] to Helga having been made so nervous by teachers that she messed her pants in class and did not dare to tell anyone. Other mothers did not feel comfortable academically and counted the days until graduation. Mothers like Anna referred to cheerleaders as snobs, yet her daughter was a cheerleader. Occupationally, some of the mothers felt threatened by or looked down upon by those with a college education. Perhaps the mothers' self-consciousness about their perceived lack of intellectual capabilities and their lack of participation in their educational community contributed to their unwillingness or inability to be more proactive in obtaining procedural knowledge for their daughters.

Jane, on the other hand, who grew up in a family of highly educated men and women, held pragmatic views on the educated. From her family she internalized "the feeling was education was a good thing, not that it made you better than anybody, it was just on the ledger of life." Similarly, Hannah grew up in a college town where having an education was not unusual. These views contrasted with those of the other participants' who thought that an education meant being better or smarter than another person.

Despite several of the mothers' apprehensions about educated persons, they wanted their daughters to obtain college degrees. As mentioned previously, the mothers believed that their daughters must obtain a college education because it was a requirement for success in today's society and because their daughters should not rely on others to take care of them financially. Vivian, however, wanted her daughter to obtain a college education because she did not want her daughter to have to prove her intelligence and self-worth. Because Vivian did not have a post-secondary education,

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[9] "Stats" denoted those students who were popular, pretty, and financially well off.

Vivian believed she was not as smart as her colleagues and, therefore, had to work harder than everyone else to prove her worth; and, as a result, had to "fudge it," which echoed Charlip's (1995) participants who stated, "Despite my accomplishments…I still have the sneaking suspicion that someone will shout 'Fraud!' and send me away. A part of me doesn't believe that I can really know as much as they do or that I will ever fit in" (p. 27).

Vivian's belief that one's level of education reflected one's level of intelligence was termed "certification of mind through formal education" by Sennett and Cobb (1973, p. 180). The theme of becoming educated like the successful *them*, for Vivian, meant not needing to pretend to be one of *them*:

> I feel ripped off today about that because my adult life now, when I was working, I had to fudge my way and learn to be so confident that I can do this even though I don't have these degrees, that I can do this just as well as the next person, and I did prove it. I had to fudge my way through it, pretend almost in a way, that I was an educated person; I knew what I was doing. So I had to act confident. My vocabulary, just the way I presented myself, that I knew what I was doing. No one ever asked me. I shocked the hell out of a lot of people asking me if I even had my doctorate degree, you know? But that's the kind of image I guess I played, this façade, but it was really me, though. I feel like I fooled, I proved to a lot of people that you don't have to have that college degree in order to be successful and stand amongst all of you. It was fudging it in a way for me to prove to my colleagues, who are all educated with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees, that whether they knew my education level or not, that I was just as good and therefore had to prove and produce and put out results as if maybe someone who with a degree would do.

Vivian also believed that her work ethic compensated for her lack of education but did not want her daughter to experience the same struggles:

> Another part of it was that because I had such desire, tenaciously to do that, that I came out more than what I expected. I keep thinking about that part, though, because I don't want that kind of yucky feeling to have to prove to other people that I'm just as good even though I didn't go to college. I don't want that for my kids, especially my daughter. I want her to be able to hold her head up and feel just as equal if not better and proud of her results,

> whatever she sets her mind to. In order for [my children] not to fudge it, I mean I can't make them go to college, but seriously consider the benefits of it nowadays, and think of it as just four more years of college at that point, four more years of school versus a lifetime. Again, because I busted my butt to prove, because again fudging, because of fudging, I felt I needed to prove, and I gave it 110% for those reasons plus the way I was brought up.

Since the daughters in this study all attended schools that were predominantly working-class, a final contradiction in the aspiration of becoming educated is that the academic preparation received in high school, particularly if the daughters did not receive good academic counseling and guidance, will most likely not be sufficient to ensure success, despite having received good grades. Unfortunately, schools with predominantly working-class populations do not always have the goal of college in mind for their students (Willis, 1977).

c. Changing Social Class.

Another category of contradictions was social class messages. The subtext of the message *be successful* was that success would result in social mobility. Social mobility is the movement from one social class to another (Katsillis & Armer, 2000), typically thought of as upward movement and as a means of improving one's status both financially and socially. With the mothers' eyes toward social mobility, two categories of contradictions emerged: 1.) perceptions of social class, which included stereotypes; and, 2.) subjective class identification.

i. Perceiving Social Class. Underlying the desire to become successful were covert social class messages, which the participants had not recognized. The unsuccessful *them* about whom the participants spoke with disdain (e.g., those sitting on bar stools, those on welfare, those with no education, those in dead end jobs) were the poor and working-class. While the stereotype of those in poverty is inner city, people of

color, usually black, the "welfare queens" those people "leeching" off of welfare, the participants in this study and others (Schein, 1995; Dodson, 1999) paint a very different picture of the poor: hardworking and struggling to make ends meet. Yet, the women in this study stereotyped those on public assistance and distanced themselves from those they perceived to be unsuccessful.

Another social class contradiction was how the participants, both mothers and daughters, stereotyped those who were successful and those who were not, which may be based on social class perceptions. The participants believed that those who are successful had nice clothes, a nice house, and a job that provided financial security. Further, they believed that those who were not successful did not have those things, nor did they pay their bills or child support. They also believed the unsuccessful were in dead end jobs and wasted their lives sitting on bar stools. The unsuccessful were the poor or working-class, while the successful, on the other hand, were perceived to be middle- or upper-class.

ii. Identifying with a Social Class. Further evidence that the messages about those who are unsuccessful included both the poor and the working-class was the fact that two of the mothers referred to themselves as other than working-class. As with the women in Skeggs' (1997) longitudinal study of working-class women, two of the women in this study, to use Skegg's term, "disidentified" with being working-class. Vivian, for example, described her family as "middle-class" while Hannah described herself as "upper-middle class." There may be two reasons for this phenomenon. Some studies have found that the former working-class were embarrassed by their working-class identities, meaning that they lived with the shame, humiliation, and judgment of their

former class position (Dews & Law, 1995; Rubin, 1976; Rubin, 1994; Ryan & Sackrey, 1984; Sennett & Cobb, 1972; Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993). In Skeggs' study with working-class participants, she found the same phenomenon, but also found the women to be humiliated by being labeled "white trash." Similarly, one participant in this study balked at my use of the term "trailer park" and informed me that she lived in a "mobile home." Skegg's (1997) participants were also frustrated by their inability to move out of their working-class position in life, which was also desired by the women in this study. In addition, from the way the mothers and some of the daughters spoke negatively about their towns and townspeople, it appeared that such shame and judgment may be a reason for their disidentification.

A second reason for the participants' disidentification with their own social class is found in Kohn's (1977) study in which he uses the term "subjective class identification," which implied that people may identify with a social class of which they are not a part. This may be true of the participants who identified with the social class to which they aspired to belong. The participants were clearly not content with their current social status, and several appeared to have adopted the value system of the class to which they aspired and to which they pushed their daughters, namely the middle-class.

Sennett and Cobb (1972) also identified the phenomenon "status incongruity." When people move from one social class upward to the next, they do not know the rules of the new position, and they feel something is wrong with themselves as they are caught between two worlds. The phenomenon itself may be a backlash in response to dominant/subordinate positions, or, it may be in response to low self-esteem, as Sennett and Cobb's participants believed that the educated had the power to judge them, which

made them feel "inadequate, vulnerable and undignified" (1972, p. 78).

3. Conclusion.

The collective social class contradictions are that mothers and daughters see themselves as better than others in their own social class. The participants want to become part of the middle-class, yet some believe they are already of the middle-class. If the daughters become educated, like those the mothers did not trust, then the daughters may distance or disassociate themselves from the families, friends, and communities. Worse yet, the mothers may lose their daughters to what Sennett and Cobb (1972) referred to as an "alien way of life."

B. Role Models and Mentors

The lack of procedural knowledge, the passivity of the mothers, and the desire of the daughters for information about college begged the question whether mothers and daughters had any role models they looked up to or mentors who were providing advice and guidance in order to help them attain their goals, particularly since studies have shown that role models and mentors outside of the working-class occupations are scarce (Dews & Law, 1995; Ryan & Sackrey, 1984; Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993). In addition, one of the initial questions of this study was whether mothers were their daughters' first role models or mentors. This study showed that both positive and negative role models existed, mentors were uncommon, and mothers were included in both categories with varying degrees of effectiveness.

As illustrated by Lynn and Hannah, positive role models and mentors are beneficial for attaining the information desired about college entrance requirements and how to finance college. This successful role modeling and mentoring relationship

illustrated that successful behavior can be modeled, and access to those who have knowledge of how to succeed can help daughters achieve their goals. At this point in the discussion, it is important to remind the reader of the distinction made in Chapter II between role models and mentors, a distinction that was often misunderstood and blurred by the participants in this study, as it has been in other studies (see review of literature on mentors and protegés by Merriam, 1983). If the goal for the participants was for daughters to become successful, the influence of role models and mentors would be crucial to overcoming the sometimes limiting messages of the working-class work ethic, the participants' lack of procedural knowledge, and the mothers' passivity.

1. Role Models.

In this study, role models were typically people who were living the lives the participants would like to lead, who were worthy of emulation because they possessed characteristics or had achieved accomplishments to which the participants aspired, and who had had a positive impact on the participants' lives. For the participants, role models were either actual people such as contemporaries, family members, school personnel, and supervisors; or, were a composite of characteristics that an idealized role model would possess.

a. Living The Lives They Would Like to Lead.

For a few of the daughters, people who were living the lives they would like to lead served as role models. For Marque, a cousin served as a role model, and each of the cousin's achievements became a goal for Marque, beginning with going to college. Marque said of her cousin, "I want to be like her. When she went into college, that's when I wanted to go to college. So and that's when I was like oh maybe I'll be a

teacher like her. I looked up to her. I was like, this is what I would want to do. I want to go to college." Ryan said her father, a respected member of the church who holds advanced degrees, was her role model. Tricia looked up to her uncle, "When it comes to jobs and schooling, I want to be like my uncle 'cause when it comes to that stuff, he's got it all." However, Tricia noted that her uncle "doesn't have a wife, he doesn't have kids, he doesn't have a house. I want that." As a result, Tricia eventually decided that her stepfather and mother were her role models because they "work hard and have a great house."

b. Possessing Characteristics to Which Participants Aspired.

For both mothers and daughters, role models were individuals who possessed characteristics or who had attained accomplishments to which they aspired; sometimes these individuals were real, and sometimes they were an amalgamation of idealized characteristics. As mentioned above, Tricia identified her uncle as a role model because he led the life she desired; however, this ideal was not complete as she added to her description of a role model "somebody who got [sic] their way through college and all that stuff, get the stable career. Is happy with what they're doing. Starts a family. Has the white picket fence and all that stuff." Other daughters, like Lynn, described characteristics their role model would possess: "Somebody who isn't working constantly, that has time for family. Somebody just who likes her job and they're successful and they have a nice home and they live in a nice town and I don't know, and they're happy kind of, they're happy with their family, they're happy with their job, not overly stressed." Similarly, for Nickita's mother, Helga, her idealized role model was someone of a higher station than she, who "doesn't have a hair out of place [and] she's got

this, and she's got that." Helga viewed her idealized role model with envy, "Like why couldn't I have done that? Why couldn't I be like her? Why couldn't I be making the money she's making?" Vivian, on the other hand, felt she had a lot of role models and could learn from a number of people "from my mom and dad, of course, to my own siblings to friends and acquaintances and people who are working for their doctorate's [sic] degree."

Some of the daughters identified contemporaries as role models because of characteristics they possessed, which they felt they themselves did not possess. Leigh looked up to a friend who was "really pretty and intelligent, she thinks the best about everything." Ryan described her role model generally as "Pretty, blonde, skinny people. Because they were pretty and blonde and had blue eyes and everybody loved them. I'm fat and have brown hair and brown eyes. People that have something that you want to be or that you can't be then you tend to look up to or are in a position you want to be in. I like to be happy too." Similarly, Rexene mentioned her brother, who was very "understanding and smart." She went on to list all of the characteristics that made him a worthy role model (e.g., military service, read a lot, worked his way up the ladder, pursued a pilot's license, explained things without making her feel stupid).

Role models were also those who were worthy of emulation. Ryan provided this example:

> Someone that I look up to... she's 12 years old...she just has this air about her that people are attracted to. She can tell good jokes, never put any airs and she knows how to smile and make fun of herself, but not making fun of herself and she's very personable and she just has something about her that makes you want to smile. I wish everybody was that way; we'd be a lot happier.

Both Vivian and Jane stated that former supervisors were their role models. For Jane, a supervisor who had had a particularly difficult life yet was very compassionate with others served as a role model, "She wouldn't break the rules for anybody, but she was always a very compassionate person. You'd tell her about a situation, she's, 'Oh, the poor dears. Is there anything we can do to help them?'"

The mothers in this study often mentioned their own mothers or parents as role models, as persons worth emulating, usually because of educational successes. Hannah said, "Well my parents were good role models. They went back to school later than normal and you know, since she didn't finish, that was a big thing. None of my family graduated and went off to college and lived in the dorms or anything like that." Similarly, Vivian's father obtained his GED in his 50's and went on to become a church deacon. Jane, with regard to her mother, stated, "She had had the example of being an educated person."

c. Providing Positive Impact.

Laura and Anna mentioned teachers and other school personnel as role models because of the positive impact they had on the participants' lives. Anna, for example, viewed her former special education teacher as a role model because she helped Anna through particularly difficult high school years. "I would really have to say it was the teachers at school were my role models," said Laura:

> Um, just the way they were with us as students. We were treated more like they were surrogate parents or grandparents kind of thing, and they wanted to teach you and they wanted you to learn. They wanted you to take part in certain things and I didn't get that with my own parents. So getting that in school and feeling, even if they were doing it for their own benefit, that's fine, but to me, it was like they wanted me to be a part of school. I liked being part of like a school family kind of thing because that's the way it was when I was in school. So I really have to say I think it was the teachers that were my role models.

In another sense, as Vivian pointed out, peers may have also had a positive impact; therefore, Vivian advised her daughter that "Her friends are mentors because they bring the best out of her. She's finding out that well, they push themselves and take all these hard courses and have a better chance with scholarships and college…she'll be with these positive influences."

The fact that many of the individuals identified as role models were family members or were compilations of characteristics of an idealized role model mirrors Fischer (1986) found that daughters of middle class families often had role models other than parents, which was in contrast to working-class daughters where there were few people accessible to serve as "models of success" (p. 85).

2. Mentors.

When asked whom they sought out for advice on education and careers, many of the participants mentioned other family members (e.g., aunts, uncles, cousins, older siblings) while others mentioned family friends and colleagues. Mothers also referred to former supervisors, counselors, and husbands as mentors. Mentors were typically those who possessed and provided information they needed, and supported and pushed participants to succeed.

a. Possessing and Providing Needed Information.

Mentors often provided protegés with information needed at a specific period of time in their lives. Lisa's grandmother served as both a role model, living the life Lisa would like to lead, and mentor by providing specific information about beauty school: "Like I said, my grandma right now. She tells me about like how she went through beauty school. She tells me like what I need and what I have to do. She tells me that I

need to really concentrate and learn all the different tools. She teaches me everything now." Nickita mentioned her aunt, who was a retired school teacher, but Nickita's work ethic crept in when she said she tries "to figure thing out on my own as much as I should. You have to be independent."

As with the participants' role models, sometimes the mentor was an idealized image or someone who had information or advice that they needed at the time. Ryan stated:

> There's not one person who's smart enough to tell me what I want to do. I'll talk to mom, then I'll talk to people in church, and I will talk to Tom, by boss. I'll talk to teachers. I have had people at different stages of my life that I can talk to them if I wanted to, but not like one particular person that I always go to talk to. I think I like having lots of different people. There's certain people around my life I can talk to.

In Lynn's case, because she felt she had already planned her life, she wondered aloud whether mentors were necessary: "Is it possible to know what you want to do and have it all set out without having a mentor? If I do have one, then I don't know who it is," this despite all the help and advice from her mother.

b. Supporting and Pushing Participants to Succeed.

Hannah, Laura, and Helga credited supervisors who provided them with career and educational advice with being mentors. "There was a man I used to work for who was an older guy who was just a good friend and he was like a mentor," said Hannah. Laura discussed her current supervisor and the characteristics that make her a mentor; however, since it did not appear that the supervisor provided mentoring, the title of role model was more befitting:

> I'd probably have to say the boss I have now would be my mentor, somebody I really, really admire. She's a lot younger than me, and I think women in business, you don't see too many of it because the setting I work in, the lumber

> business, is a man's business, and this woman is head of operations, and she knows more than all the guys in the entire company. She's been there since high school. So she knows the ins and outs of the company. She goes to all the buying seminars, does all the buying for the company. She's multi-functional, is what I call her. She started out working in the yard driving a forklift. [S]he's just fabulous to watch in action because you don't see too many women that can be in total control. She's married, has one child; her husband stays at home, takes care of the child.

As with Laura, even though Helga's boss was younger, Helga valued the advice of her boss. "She has a little bit more encouraging words."

Some mentors pushed the participants to succeed, as was the case with Helga whose life was altered considerably by an unemployment counselor who stressed that she should return to school to make herself more marketable. Because of his counsel, she returned to school to improve her skills and obtained a job that allowed her to support herself and her daughter. Her mentor understood the long-term importance of education and was firm with her about education, "Bob Stone was the one who led me (sighs) the way to go. Go back to school. You need this," he told her. "He always comes through for me, and when I grew frustrated and said, 'But Bob, I need the money; I need a fucking job.' Don't worry about it; don't worry about it, you know? 'Ah, you'll be all right,' he said."

Other mentors provided support for the participants and were simultaneously role models. A few of the mothers mentioned their husbands as mentors, specifically those husbands who had higher levels of education than their wives. Rexene and Anna referred to their husbands, who held associate's degrees, as mentors because they are "educated." Anna's husband advised her on forms of employment wherein he informed her that bartending in a bar is unacceptable, while bartending in a restaurant was acceptable. Rexene took the advice of her husband because, "He thinks education is

very, very important," implying that because he is more highly educated than she that he knows better what is acceptable and what is not.

3. Mothers as Role Models and Mentors.

The following emerged to answer the question of whether the mothers in this study were role models and mentors for their daughters: mothers' beliefs that they were role models and mentors, mothers' covert roles as models and mentors, and the intergenerational effects of the mothers as role models and mentors, some of which were not positive.

a. Modeling and Mentoring Daughters.

The mothers in this study saw themselves as role models for their daughters. Vivian believed that she was a role model for Tricia because of the success she had attained through hard work despite her "mistakes" and lack of a college degree. She stated that her

> work habits have paid off in a way, of her witnessing me work my butt off, work with every person, very educated people, and I would just meld right in with all of them as if I had the same background and education, but I worked double hard and didn't take it for granted. Maybe I would have if I did have the education. Who knows? But I didn't because I felt I couldn't afford to take it for granted because I felt like I was behind the eight ball and had to prove to someone that I was capable even thought I didn't have the quote/unquote "degree." So she sees me as hard working paying off in many areas.

On the other hand, the daughters, with one exception, were unsure whether their mothers were their role models and/or mentors. As Nickita stated, "Well, my mom sometimes, but not really." Tricia was also unsure, "I guess probably maybe my mom too, I don't know, I don't run to her for everything." Despite the daughters' uncertainty, the mothers appeared to be role models in covert ways. For example, Marque took a business course as a result of her mother operating her own landscaping

business. Helga may have served as a role model by way of her full-time job and her pursuit of post-secondary education as noted by her daughter, Nickita. "She went two years extra in business. So she had a pretty good job." However, Nickita seemed unaware that her mother struggled financially and educationally. The exception to this uncertainty was Marque who mentioned her mother as a role model:

> Sometimes my mom. She dealt with hard times. She's always gone through them, and she's always outgoing. She's always moving all the time. She doesn't like to just stop and look back. She always just wants to go, go, go. That's just something that I look up to because she's got a lot of energy. So she's someone that, she's not just lazy to the point where I'm just going to do nothing today. She's always got to do something. So it's interesting to always see what she's doing.

b. Intergenerational Influences.

There emerged possible intergenerational influences of mothers as role models and mentors. As the reader will recall, most of the mothers reported that their own mothers were too busy tending to their families to discuss daughters' education and career aspirations. This may account for why none of the mothers referred to their own mothers as role models or mentors. Despite this lack of recognition, the grandmothers were also covert role models in the same manner the mothers were covert role models for their daughters. Some of the mothers in this study did not want to repeat the "mistakes" of their own mothers (e.g., lack of support, not discussing career and educational opportunities with daughters, lack of college education). These mothers, as with their daughters, did not understand what Schein (1995) referred to as a "A restricted range of aspiration and limited knowledge of occupations and jobs available was true of their mothers as well. Most of their mothers did not work outside of the home and many raised large families" (p. 87). For this trouble, one mother referred to

her own mother as "lazy" because she did not work outside of the home where she raised five children. Some of the mothers understood that this phenomenon was a result of the time cohort in which women of their mothers' generation got married and had children, with most not pursuing post-secondary education or working outside of the home.

The mothers in this study had the same experience as those in Schein's (1995) study, "Many of the women were discouraged from advancing further in school, had no female models in jobs other than the low-level types, or were not guided by parents or teachers to think about their employment futures. Only one woman said her mother had a dream for her to go to college." In this study, Jane's mother, the only grandmother with values more in line with those of the middle class, who was Ivy-league educated and held a graduate degree, was the only grandmother who encouraged her daughter to go to college; however, Hannah's mother set an example by obtaining a degree late in life.

In fact, the mothers in this study may have been good role models of the work ethic (e.g., working hard, doing things the right way the first time, not relying on the help of others, and not quitting) as demonstrated by their successes as sole supporters of households. On the other hand, the mothers may have also served as negative role models as evidenced by the daughters not wanting to repeat their mothers "mistakes" (e.g., having children at a young age, not pursuing an education, not pursuing a career).

The fact that teachers and guidance counselors were not identified more often as role models and mentors was surprising, particularly in a geographic area that had a limited number of college-educated professionals. However, it may be that since

teachers and guidance counselors are paid to work with and guide students, most participants may not have considered them in the capacities of role models and mentors. It may also have been the case that teachers and guidance counselors play a more covert role, which did not present itself in this study. Additionally, the pilot study for this research and other research (Sidel, 1990) suggested that television portrayals would play a more significant role in its effects on the participants' views of role models, education, and careers. In this study, only two daughters mentioned the influence of media. Lynn believed her image of herself as a woman in a business suit with a briefcase was as a result of portrayals in movies. While Nickita was the only participant who made a direct connection between her career aspirations and television. "I think the EMT, I don't know, watching the maternity ward on TLC[10] or something."

4. Conclusion.

The findings from this study supported those of other studies (Fischer, 1986; Kahn, 1980; Rubin, 1976), which found that daughters looked up to their mothers as role models. The mothers in this study were both covert and overt role models for their daughters, serving as both positive and negative role models. On the negative side, some mothers had made "mistakes" that they and their daughters hoped would not be repeated by the daughters. On the positive side, some mothers had obtained training, education, or a home, which were sources of pride for the both the mothers and the daughters. Other influences were that mothers modeled positive behaviors such as returning to school or gaining employment, the latter supporting the findings of several other studies in which daughters of employed women were more likely to choose their

[10] The Learning Channel

mothers as role models (Douvan, 1976; Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974a; Hoffman, 1979; Stein & Bailey, 1973). Another influence of mothers as role models was the mothers' success as sole supporters of families.

The mothers in this study were their daughters' first mentors, despite the daughters' lack of acknowledgement of such. The daughters sought out their mothers' support, advice, and encouragement, which was provided, and which are considered part of a mentor's role. Mothers as mentors is further supported by research that showed that daughters' first discussions about education occurred with their mothers 51% of the time (Bourque & Cosand, 1989), and mothers were the major source of encouragement (Grimes & Morris, 1997), which is more likely in households headed by single mothers. Additionally, several studies referred to the impact of mothers' messages on their daughters (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Fischer, 1986; Kamarovsky, 1987; Sholomaskas & Axelrod, 1986), as was the case in this study, which was considered informal, or unintentional, mentoring. Yet another study cited single parents as positive role models because they are less hierarchical and have less rigid or well-defined sex roles (Dowd, 1997). The effectiveness of the mothers' mentoring depended upon their level of procedural knowledge, which was generally very low. With the exception of one mother, this meant that most of the mothers were not effective mentors, except in the respect that they supported and pushed their daughters to become successful. In this respect, the mothers were their daughters first educational mentors, but as a result of the mothers lack of procedural knowledge there became a point at which the mothers became ineffective and the daughters needed mentoring from more knowledgeable others.

The fact that mothers are their daughters' first role models and mentors, but that they are not always positive or effective ones, and the fact that the daughters are seeking information necessary to become successful provides evidence that daughters would benefit from others who are positive role models and who can provide effective mentoring. As discussed in the previous chapters, the messages of the work ethic may hinder the daughters' ability to obtain procedural knowledge; therefore, mentors are crucial for helping the daughters to obtain needed information and to overcome the potentially limiting messages of the work ethic. As will be discussed in the next chapter, mothers themselves would benefit from some training and mentoring of their own by knowledgeable others (e.g., guidance counselors and teachers) in order to be effective mentors for their children.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

> I strongly believe the more you're involved in your child's education, the more successful they're going to be. -- Vivian

This study evolved from my experiences teaching working-class students, having grown up in working-class family, and having been educated in a predominantly working-class school system. The participants in this study provided insights for the questions that guided this research, which was designed as a semi-structured, in-depth study using principles of feminist research perspective, and was informed by research on interviewing working-class women and adolescents. The self-selected participants in this study were seven pairs of working-class teenaged girls and their mothers, the latter were, or had been, sole supporters of families from two neighboring New England mills towns in western Massachusetts. Of the seven pairs who participated in the series of two or three interviews, six pairs completed the study. Two pilot studies preceded this study, which determined its interview methodology.

What emerged from this study were both multigenerational and intergenerational messages transmitted from maternal grandmothers to the mothers and from mothers to their daughters and the mechanisms by which those messages were transmitted. The participants also provided insights into how their working-class messages both shaped and contradicted their aspirations for success. In this study, the intersection of class and the mothers' experiences as sole supporters revealed messages about working-class values and what it meant for the participants to be successful or

not. Ultimately, the study highlighted the need for positive role models and mentors, for both mothers and daughters.

In this chapter I review the purpose of this study and the questions used to guide it. I also summarize the findings, discuss the implications for future research and practice, and provide a conclusion for this study with a final word on feminist research. In Chapters IV-VI, I examined the participants' interviews to

- identify the messages used by working-class mothers who were, or who had been, sole supporters of their families to socialize their daughters to the role of education in their lives;
- discover what communications occurred between this group of working-class mothers and their teenaged daughters about education;
- gain insight into those covert and overt messages, both those given and those received, and what meaning or value the participants made from those messages;
- determine whether there was an intergenerational transmission of educational values;
- determine whether a female headed household had any effect on the communications that occurred between working-class mothers and their daughters; and
- discover whether mothers are their daughters' first role models and/or mentors.

The following questions were used to guide this research:

- What, if anything, are working-class mothers telling their daughters about education, the value or lack of value of education, and the economic impact education can have on their lives?
- What are the mothers' and daughters' perceptions about education, how does education fit into their life's goals, and what do they expect from an education?
- What are the social forces that shaped these opinions and perceptions, and are mothers transferring these perceptions and resulting values to their daughters?
- And, are mothers their daughters' first educational role models and mentors?

The following results emerged from this study:

- Working-class mothers are talking with their teenaged daughters about the value of education, particularly a college education, specifically about how education is a prerequisite for success.
- The dominant message transmitted from mothers to daughters was *be successful*, which had specific meaning to these working-class participants, and was influenced by the working-class work ethic and the experiences of the mothers who had been sole supporters of families.
- While education was deemed important, the mothers had a difficult time articulating why and, once articulated, this study illuminated the mothers' lack of knowledge about how the educational system worked in practice.
- The mothers also did not know how to help their daughters obtain a college education, which they believed was a precursor to success, nor were they actively seeking information to help their daughters.

- There were intergenerational messages passed from mothers to daughters relative to the working-class work ethic and becoming successful.
- There were multigenerational messages passed from maternal grandmothers to the mothers, who, in turn, passed those messages to their daughters. Those messages were of the working-class work ethic, the achievement of good grades, and the fear and/or distrust of educated persons.
- While discussions about the value of education occurred, the multigenerational messages of the working-class work ethic were more influential than messages related to the struggles experienced by the mothers who had been sole supporters of families.
- Within the interplay of these messages were a series of contradictions of which the participants seemed unaware.
- The mothers in this study were their daughters' educational role models, both positively and negatively, and were also their daughters' mentors; however, the mothers effectiveness in the latter role ceased due to their lack of procedural knowledge.

A. Discussion of Findings

The mothers' support and encouragement of their daughters to attend college did not emanate from their understanding of what obtaining a college degree would entail, nor, as discussed in the contradictions section of the previous chapter, from an understanding of the consequences of obtaining a college degree. Rather, their support and encouragement were a result of the intersection of the messages of the working-class work ethic and the mothers' desire to have their daughters not struggle as they had

as sole supporters of families. For many of the mothers, their support and encouragement were also due to their dissatisfaction with their own lives because of their lack of opportunities, which resulted in their desire for their daughters to be more successful than they. To that end, participants identified what they believed were the characteristics of those who are successful and those who are not; the latter category, as they determined, also included the mothers from this study.

The multigenerational messages about the working-class work ethic were the foundation for both overt and covert communications from mothers to daughters and were used by the mothers to socialize their daughters to the role of work and education in their lives. This form of socialization to class position has been identified in several studies (Bourdieu, 1984a; Kohn, 1969; Kohn & Schooler, 1983). In fact, Rubin (1976) said, "Indeed, it may be the singular triumph of this industrial society—perhaps of any social order—that not only do we socialize people to their appropriate roles and stations, but that the process by which this occurs is so subtle that it is internalized and passed from parents to children by adults who honestly believe they are acting out of choices they have made in their own lifetime" (p. 211). More prevalent than messages stemming from the mothers' experiences as sole supporters were those of the working-class work ethic; however, the mothers were using those messages to propel their daughters from one social class to the next.

Three of the mothers' messages pervaded the daughters' beliefs and therefore dominated this study: work hard, get an education, and be successful. While these messages may not be specific to the working-class, what is specific to this group of working-class females were the underlying messages of what work meant (e.g., hard

work is gratifying, effort brings its own reward, quitting is not acceptable, don't rely on the help of others, do things the right way the first time), messages of what it meant to be successful (e.g., look the image; become educated, financially secure, and free), and messages of what it meant to be unsuccessful (e.g., repeating mothers' mistakes, teen pregnancy, not having goals). In fact, the work-ethic messages identified appeared to have had the strongest influence on daughters, stronger even than any messages related to the mothers' experiences as sole supporters of families. For the participants, obtaining an education was seen as a way to achieve more than those caught in the "cycle." Obtaining an education was also seen as a way to obtain financial security and to achieve the freedom to direct one's own life and to achieve social mobility.

The unspoken goal of success was social mobility, specifically, becoming middle-class, even though a some of the participants believed they were already of the middle-class. Despite the desire to be successful and move out of their current social class, the mothers were not aware of the contradictions inherent in their messages of success. With a single exception, there was no understanding of how the class system (lower-, middle-, upper-class) is perpetuated in education. The participants were unaware of how the selection of a high school (e.g., private v. public v. technical high school) and how the selection of courses during high school (e.g., business, honors, AP) would impact their daughters' ability to gain entrance into college or into what kind of college (e.g., moderately-, highly-selective). While two of the daughters spoke disparagingly about community colleges as if they meant a lack of status (one did not want her picture in the local paper announcing her attendance at community college; another wanted to meet a smarter group of friends), the participants did not understand

1.) the impact of attending a community college versus a selective or moderately selective college, and, 2.) how college selection either limited or provided access to equally selective graduate schools or careers.

While the participants in this study believed that their daughters must obtain a college education and pushed their daughters to do so, they did not fully understand why, except for a vague notion that this was what was necessary in today's society. Additionally, there was only a vague awareness of how education would help their daughters in the long-term, supporting Grimes and Morris' (1997) findings of an "unawareness of the routes to college and the possibilities connected to a college education" (p. 79). As an example, the mothers did not understand how education prepared one for a career or that a certain level of education is a precursor to occupational self-direction. Instead, the participants saw a college degree as a means of social mobility, which has been supported by other research: "Education is widely viewed as both developing and reflecting individual skills and abilities, and it is therefore used as a means of social selection. Thus, education enhances social mobility by providing for social selection based on achieved rather than ascribed characteristics of individuals." (Katsillis & Armer, 2000, p. 756).

The need for working-class persons to obtain a college education in today's society was codified by Grimes and Morris (1997) when they identified five societal trends:

1. the failure of working-class wages to keep pace with inflation,
2. the "deskilling" of many working-class jobs,
3. the declining role of unions in both the economy and in politics,
4. the growing importance of higher education as a qualification for even minimally adequate jobs in the labor market, and

5. the disappearance of better-paying jobs within the manufacturing sector of the economy (p. 13).

Securing a college education, despite the participants' desire and the economic need, was inhibited by the participants' lack of procedural knowledge. The impact of this lack of procedural knowledge and lack of knowledge about resulting opportunities or options may have life-long implications, particularly with regard to obtaining an undergraduate education and, if desired, a graduate education, as found by Grimes and Morris (1997).

While studies have shown a significant relationship between educational attainment and later socioeconomic attainment (Bane, 1986; Bane and Ellenwood, 1983; Blau & Duncan, 1967; Duncan & Featherman, 1972; Jencks, et al., 1972; McLanahan & Garfinkel, 1989; Osmond & Grigg, 1978; Rank, 1994; Sewell, Haller, & Ohlendorf, 1970), educational and socioeconomic attainment may not result in an improvement in social status. According to Borman, et. al. (1988) "Certain skills and traits are seen to assist the individual in pursuing and attaining various types of jobs and careers (e.g., supervising, negotiating, and mentoring), which appear to be intergenerationally transmitted and the working-class are at an disadvantage because they are less likely to have experienced them than middle class" (p. 233). However, while educational attainment is touted as a means to socioeconomic attainment, several studies have shown that education alone may not be sufficient for social mobility that intergenerational transmission of assets may be a more critical factor (Cheng & Page-Adams, 1996; Rank, 1994; Schiller, 1989). Therefore, the mothers' reliance on

educational success alone may not result in the social mobility they desire for their daughters.

B. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this and other studies, it is my contention that positive role models and mentors are needed for both working-class mothers and their daughters. This is not meant to imply that the mere presence of both would ensure success; however, it may increase the percentage of those who achieve the success to which they aspire. The presence of positive role models and mentors may also help young women understand the role education may play in their future success. In this next section, I will discuss why mentors are needed for both mothers and daughters and present the literature that supports this conclusion.

1. Mentors for the Mothers.

As their daughters' first educational resources, mothers would benefit from the support of informed mentors because mothers themselves must have sufficient and correct information to effectively mentor their daughters. Additionally, this study showed that the mothers lacked self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) to obtain the desired procedural knowledge necessary to implement behaviors required for successful goal attainment. Mentors may help mothers overcome their lack of self-efficacy by providing the mothers with the advice, support, and encouragement needed to successfully mentor their daughters.

2. Mentors for the Daughters.

There are three reasons daughters need mentors other than their mothers: a. the mothers are ineffective in this role, b. certain characteristics must be possessed in order

for social mobility to successfully occur, and c. once social mobility is attained, on-going support is necessary.

a. Supplementing Ineffective Mentoring.

The findings from this study highlighted the most obvious reason daughters need mentors: the mothers, the daughters' first educational mentors, had insufficient procedural knowledge to effectively provide their daughters with procedural advice through their high school years. As discussed above, this is not to say that the mothers cannot obtain the information, as evidenced by one mother, but that the mothers themselves need to be mentored.

b. Possessing Necessary Characteristics.

Once the daughters obtain a college degree, they will need mentors beyond their mothers, particularly mentors from the middle- or upper-class, to help daughters overcome potential working-class deficits of material, cultural, and social resources that have been identified by researchers (e.g., proper speech, grammar, manners, access to print material and the arts) (Bourdieu, 1984b; Coleman, 1988; Lareau, 1987; Robinson, 1984). Daughters need mentors to help them navigate career paths, particularly those in traditionally male-dominated professions. According to Chase (1995), "Work histories were not only about upward mobility into a male-and white-dominated occupation, but also about upward mobility from the working-class to the upper-middle-class professional world," (p. 40-41) and Aisenberg and Harrington (1988) "...for millennia, women have been subject to authority held by men, and those women who now share authority do so in systems still controlled by men. And these systems still operate in practice, if not in theory, on the premise of women's inequality"(p. 62).

c. Ongoing Support.

A final reason why daughters need positive mentors will be as a result of attained social mobility. Some researchers argue that those who have social mobility, particularly as a result of their educational attainment, may experience consequences as a result of their cultural differences (Dews & Law, 1995; Grimes & Morris, 1997; Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993). Those cultural differences (e.g., values, work ethic, ability to network and form social relationships) may hinder their ability to attain success or a level of comfort in their new social class. Grimes and Morris (1997) also identified psychological consequences (e.g., perceptions of being "different," of being imposters, of being "outsiders"), which mentors may help to ameliorate.

The caveat to the above is that while several studies have shown the importance of mentors to the success of women entering education and the professions (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Arnold, 1995; Chase, 1995; Dews & Law, 1995; Grimes & Morris, 1997; Walker & Mehr, 1992), others mention the unequal access to mentors (Chase, 1995; Grimes & Morris, 1997). As discussed in Chapter VI, in working-class communities, access to knowledgeable others beyond teachers and guidance counselors is limited; therefore, developing mothers as mentors becomes crucial step in helping children in these communities become successful.

In the daughters' early years, the mothers in this study were on the right path toward mentoring their daughters to become successful. Grimes and Morris (1997) identified three characteristics that contributed to their participants' ability to "overcome the material, cultural, and social barriers to their mobility out of the working class" (p. 42). The characteristics were that the participants 1.) were smart, 2.) received

support and encouragement from parents and teachers, and 3.) had learned the value of hard work. Unknowingly, the mothers in this study provided two of the three characteristics for success and social mobility through their messages of success and the working-class work ethic; however, Grimes and Morris also found that mentors were crucial to the success of their participants. The existence of effective mentors was lacking in this study, which is not to say that the participants cannot or will not obtain mentors in the future.

A consequence of not receiving appropriate mentoring may be that the daughters become what they have defined as unsuccessful. In other words, they run the risk of becoming like the very individuals they are seeking to distance themselves from: the unsuccessful *them*. Sociologist Oscar Lewis (1966) identified a "culture of poverty," which is marked by apathy, cynicism, helplessness, and mistrust of social institutions, and Bourdieu (1984b) refers to as the "resignation of the inevitable." The characteristics of the culture of poverty have led others to believe that the less fortunate are responsible for their own fate, and, if they simply tried hard enough they could improve themselves (Gans, 1990). This unfortunate perspective rests on three faulty assumptions: first, that hard work is positively rewarded, in other words, it assumes a meritocracy; second, individuals have the requisite social capital; and finally, it assumes the socially mobile are accepted by others into their new social position.

C. Implications of Findings

1. Implications for Practice.

The implications for practice can be divided into two categories: a. teaching the parent, and b. increasing parental involvement.

a. Teaching the Parent.

The findings of this study suggest that it would be beneficial to teach parents about course levels or tracks, including AP and honors courses, their relationship to their daughters' academic futures, the relationship of these courses to college, and how they work within the college setting. It would also be beneficial for schools to include parents in identifying post-secondary educational opportunities for their children, by helping them to understand options, processes, costs, and methods of financing. There is also a body of research on intergenerational literacy that supports the tenet that if you teach the parent, you reach the child. Auerbach (1989) found that intergenerational literacy programs that offer direct or indirect instruction with the parent and/or the child are more successful.

b. Including the Parent.

Support for including the parents in discussions and decisions about their children's educational futures can be found in a study done by The Education Trust (1999), which found that top performing, high poverty schools had expended significant effort in helping parents to improve their knowledge of educational standards and in understanding student work. This refocusing of parent involvement from involvement in school governance to involvement in academic achievement is credited as one reason for the high academic success experienced by children in the high poverty schools surveyed by The Education Trust.

This study suggests that including parents in the discussions about their daughters' futures, specifically about planning for college, would also be beneficial since the daughters are actively seeking information on colleges without much support

from their mothers. As stated in the previous chapter, whether the mothers' lack of proactiveness to obtain information about colleges was due to inability or embarrassment that they did not have the information, the mothers clearly needed this knowledge to help their daughters make informed decisions. The example of Laura and Leigh illustrated how the daughter's desire to attend a technical school did not support her goal of becoming a lawyer; Laura lacked the knowledge to determine what Leigh needed academically to reach her intended goal. The obvious benefit of mentoring the mothers is that the mothers, who are often sought out by their daughters when choosing courses and colleges, would have the knowledge they need to guide their daughters toward those who are the most academically advantageous. They would also know what questions to ask of knowledgeable others, which will make them feel more confident in pursuing additional knowledge, thus making them more effective educational mentors.

2. Implications for Future Research.

The implications of this study for future research may help us to understand how a. parenting styles, b. mothers' developmental stages, c. television and media portrayals, and d. other factors such as socioeconomic levels, geography, race, ethnicity, and time cohort affect educational values.

a. Parenting Styles.

While it was not the purpose of this study to examine parenting styles or their effects, there were some clear messages worth noting. There appeared to be two categories of parenting styles exhibited by the participants: parent as friend, and parent as authority figure/coach. Both Laura and Rexene, for example, felt it was important to

be their daughters' friend. In fact, two of the mothers expressed concern about telling their daughters what to do as they thought it should be their daughters' choice. One mother was concerned that if she gave advice and it was wrong that her daughter would blame her. Hannah and Vivian, on the other hand, felt it was their duty as parents to guide their daughters and to help them make the right choices. A more thorough understanding of parenting styles, particularly of working-class parents, may provide beneficial insight into the effect of the mother as role model and mother as mentor.

b. Effects of Developmental Stage.

There are three areas of developmental effects that would be beneficial to research to help improve practice: the effects of mothers' psychosocial development on values and parenting styles, "voice" in their children's education, and on their own self-esteem. The intersection of mothers' psychosocial development and the resulting messages, values, and parenting styles are worth exploring. In the interviews with the mothers in the study, they echoed Maslow's hierarchy of needs (safety is required before they could focus on education, theirs or their children's) and echoed the ways of knowing set forth by Belenky, et. al. (1986). In fact, the lack of dialogue or having a say in their children's education was a finding in this study and in others with working-class or poor families (Brantlinger, 1993). Research on whether mothers believe they have a "voice" in their children's education and whether that voice varies depending upon the developmental level would be beneficial knowledge for practitioners. Another area worth researching is parents' "voice" in their children's education when speaking with teachers and guidance counselors.

Also related to developmental level is the level of the mothers' and daughters' self-esteem. Several women in this study appeared to have low self-esteem and often made disparaging remarks about themselves and their perceived lack of intellectual skills. Helga said of herself, "I had no self esteem. I don't know if I have any. I mean I have some (laughs), but I guess I don't think highly of myself. I don't think I'm smart enough." In fact, her low self-esteem was so pervasive that her daughter had adopted the same self-defeating language. The developmental effects of parenting style must also consider the research on single-parenting (Barber & Eccles, 1992) and lesbian parenting (Green, 1978; McGuire & Alexander, 1985), which show that when daughters are given more responsibility, they have higher levels of self-esteem and aspirations than daughters who are raised in traditional two-parent families.

c. Effects of The Media.

One of the pilot studies for this research indicated that television or media portrayals of professions might impact career aspirations as *90210* and *Melrose Place* were cited as the perfect lives while the mother said she pursued a career in law enforcement because of *Perry Mason*. Similarly, Sidel (1990) found that the young women in her 1990 study had dreams of success "straight out of *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, or *L. A. Law*," (p. 18). While the participants in this study did not appear to be affected as significantly by media portrayals, studies that include larger samplings may produce a different finding.

d. Effects of Other Indicators.

Since this study was the first to research the messages between mothers and daughters, it would be beneficial to research populations from other geographic regions

(e.g., urban, suburban), other economic strata (e.g., middle-, upper-class), and other races to determine the messages provided. Outcomes from a study of valedictorians/salutatorians (Arnold, 1995) indicate that the findings may be similar as they found that female African-American valedictorians and salutatorians in the study were pursuing higher education at a higher rate than other populations because the women said they would probably be the sole supporters of their families. While the daughters in this study did not say that they might become sole supporters, or even mention that they may have to support a family, the underlying theme is that they have the ability to do so.

Another indicator worth researching is the effect of the parents' levels of education on how children receive messages from them about education. The findings from this study are in contrast to Smith's (1991) research, which indicates that messages given by parents to their children are received differently depending upon the parent's level of education.

An additional area of research is time and geographic cohorts, such as other working-class mothers and daughters from other rural settings or mothers and daughters from the same geographic region in earlier or later generations.

D. A Final Word on Feminist Research

As with most feminist research, this study had an eye toward emancipation and transformation, transformation of the way women view education, and the way women view the role education plays in their lives, particularly with regard to its impact on their economic attainment. There are three ways I hope this research has a transformative effect. The first is that the participants' articulation and recognition of

the gaps that existed in their procedural knowledge may help them overcome their passivity and begin to make connections about their education and their economic status. My second hope is that this information can be used by practitioners to help women reflect on their educational futures and the possibilities for their economic attainment and economic self-sufficiency.

Finally, it is my hope that teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators will include parents in discussions about their children's current and future educational planning and will begin to work closely with parents on how best to prepare their children for post-secondary education, in whatever form it may take, higher education or trade school. The daughters in this study were obviously thirsty for procedural knowledge about post-secondary education, but most mothers were unable to help them. While the guidance course offered by one high school was a valuable first step, as the case study of Hannah and Lynn showed, it was the collaboration between the parent and child that resulted in a high level of procedural knowledge. The next step will be to provide parents with sufficient training and guidance so they may gain confidence in their procedural knowledge and may become the effective, positive mentors both the mothers and their daughters wish them to be.

APPENDIX A

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT BY GENDER
(See page 13 for the statistical references)

Women	**Men**
3% more less-than one-year credentials	
31% more associate's degrees	
30% more less-than four-year credentials	
Fewer four-year degrees **and** took longer to complete	10% more bachelor's degrees
	34% more first professional degrees
	39% more doctorates

APPENDIX B

FIRST HIGH SCHOOL -- SURVEY REQUEST TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE

XYZ High School
XYZ, School Superintendent
School Committee

Dear XYZ and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to present to you my research proposal. I hope you will review the enclosed documents and allow me to conduct a mailing to all mothers who have daughters in their freshman and sophomore years of high school at XYZ.

My research is tentatively titled, *"The Intergenerational Transmission of Educational Values from Single, Working-class Mothers to their Adolescent Daughters in A Massachusetts Mill Town."* I have attached my abstract for your review.

Also attached is a packet consisting of a cover letter, a consent form, and a questionnaire that I would like your permission to send to the mothers of all freshman and sophomore girls. This questionnaire is the first step toward identifying participants for the second part of the study, in which I will conduct in-depth interviews with mother and daughter pairs. I believe that the high school, particularly the guidance counselors, will find the results of the completed study most helpful in understanding the intergenerational values transmitted from mothers to daughters. This information may assist counselors in helping to transition female students to post-secondary education.

If you grant permission for this mailing, I will provide any necessary copies and postage, and will include a self-addressed stamped envelope for the convenience of returning the questionnaires.

As a former XYZ student government officer, I was also a student liaison to the School Committee for one year. I never thought I'd be appealing to the very same group years later!

Thank you for your consideration.

Most Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay, M.Ed., A.B.D.

APPENDIX C

ABSTRACT OF STUDY FOR HIGH SCHOOL APPROVAL

THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF EDUCATIONAL VALUES FROM SINGLE, WORKING-CLASS MOTHERS TO THEIR ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS IN A MASSACHUSETTS MILL TOWN

SEPTEMBER 2000

MARY JAYNE FAY, B.A., University of Massachusetts at Amherst

M.Ed., University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Ed.D., University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Directed by: Professor Patt Dodds

SEPTEMBER 2000

ABSTRACT

THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF EDUCATIONAL VALUES FROM SINGLE, WORKING-CLASS MOTHERS TO THEIR ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS IN A MASSACHUSETTS MILL TOWN

This study is designed to determine if there is an intergenerational transmission of educational beliefs and values between working-class mothers and daughters, and, as a result, if mothers are their daughters' first educational role models or mentors. This study is also designed to discover how single, working-class mothers socialize their daughters to the role of education in their lives; to discover, what if any, covert or overt

communications occur between these mothers and their daughters about education; to identify these communications, if they occur; and to identify the process of how, and if, the mothers and the daughters arrived at their own meaning of the value and the role that education plays in their lives.

The participants will be a homogeneous sampling of ten to twelve mother and daughter pairs from a Massachusetts mill town in order to provide comparable and replicable data. After an initial questionnaire, which will aid in the selection of as homogeneous a sampling as possible, data, in the form of text, will be gathered via semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the mothers and their daughters, and if available, the maternal grandmothers (to further explore the notion of intergenerational transmission). A three-interview format will be used with the mothers, and two-interview format will be used with the daughters. A topical guide has been developed to assist in the gathering of comparable data from all participants. Thematic analysis and one or more text analysis methods will be conducted to analyze the data. Text analysis may consist of identifying story chains, identifying the number and source of voices speaking through the participants, and determining the participant's active or passive agency in the formation of their educational beliefs.

APPENDIX D

FIRST HIGH SCHOOL -- MEMO FOR SURVEY PACKETS

XYZ, Superintendent
XYZ High School
XYZ Street
XYZ Town

Dear XYZ:

Thank you for securing permission from the XYZ School Committee to distribute my survey to the 9th and 10th grade girls in health class. I greatly appreciate your efforts on my behalf.

I have finally received approval from the Human Subjects Review Committee at UMass to distribute the survey (and we thought the wheels of justice turned slowly!). As we discussed, enclosed are 120 copies of the survey, and the corresponding permission form, and a stamped, a self-addressed envelope for the students to return the survey to me. If you need more copies, please let me know and I will express mail them to you.

I have also included a cover sheet for the persons distributing the survey with a suggested announcement. Please feel free to change the announcement as you see fit. If it will help, I can be present on the day the surveys are to be distributed to speak with the students and answer any questions they may have.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will call your office later this week to confirm your receipt of the package, to see whether you would like me to be present when the surveys are distributed, and to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay

XYZ home
XYZ work

cc: XYZ, Principal, XYZ High School

APPENDIX E

FIRST HIGH SCHOOL -- MEMO FOR HOME ROOM TEACHERS

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

Please hand out the survey packet to all freshman and sophomore girls.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO STUDENTS:

A former XYZ student, Mary Jayne Fay, is working on her doctorate in Education at UMass. She is looking for freshman and sophomore girls to participate in a study on teenage girls and their perceptions about education and work. Participation in this study is voluntary.

If you are interested in participating, Mary Jayne will also need your mother's permission. Please bring the packet home and discuss your participation with your mother. If you both agree that you should participate, both of you need to sign the enclosed consent form. Please complete the survey without discussing the questions with anyone, and send it back to Mary Jayne in the stamped, self-addressed envelope attached to the packet.

She would greatly appreciate your help so if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call her. Her name and phone number are on the cover memo.

Thank you.

APPENDIX F

SURVEY PACKET – MEMO TO DAUGHTERS

November 2001

Ladies:

I could use your help with a study I am conducting on teenage girls and their thoughts about education and careers for my doctoral dissertation at UMass. (Dissertation is a fancy college word for a gigantic research paper!)

I would like to hear from you about experiences with education and your thoughts about work. You can help me by completing this questionnaire and sending it to me in the attached stamped, self-addressed envelope. In order to participate in this phase of the study, however, you will need to discuss your participation with your mother and both of you need to sign the attached consent form. I encourage you not to discuss the questions on the survey with anyone and if you don't know the answer, it's OK to say "I don't know."

If you or your mother have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me. I will be happy to speak with you.

Thank you for helping me out. I greatly appreciate it.

Most Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay

APPENDIX G

SURVEY PACKET – MEMO TO MOTHERS

Dear Mothers:

This is an invitation for your daughter to participate in a study that is part of my doctoral research at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The enclosed questionnaire is phase one of a two-part study to gather some initial information from daughters in their sophomore and junior years of high school about education and their career interests. Participating in phase one of the study does not mean that your daughter will have to participate in phase two. All information will be kept confidential and no names will be used in the reporting of this information. I encourage you to read this cover letter and the attached documents and to give your daughter permission to participate in this study.

You will note that there are two documents enclosed. The first document is a Consent Form. The Consent Form is for you to complete, acknowledging that you give your permission for your daughter to answer the attached Questionnaire. Your daughter should also sign this consent form, giving me permission to use her responses in this research. The second document is a Questionnaire for your daughter to complete.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would not discuss the questions on the survey with your daughter before she fills it out. Discussing the questions or the content of the questions before your daughter completes the questionnaire may affect her answers and skew the results.

For your convenience in returning the questionnaire, a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. I hope that you and your daughter will also consider participating in the next phase of this study. You may give permission to do so at the end of the questionnaire.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at XXXX. Thank you for your time.

Most Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay, M.Ed.

APPENDIX H

SURVEY PACKET -- CONSENT FORM FOR
MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS: EDUCATION AND CAREERS QUESTIONNAIRE

I hereby give permission for my daughter to complete the attached questionnaire *Mothers and Daughters: Education and Careers* for research being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation by Mary Jayne Fay.

I understand that the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the XYZ High School are in no way responsible for this research. I understand that our identities will be kept confidential.

_____ _____

Participant's Legal Guardian Date

I hereby give permission for the responses from my questionnaire to be used for research purposes. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that in any written materials or oral presentations using this material, a pseudonym will be used.

_____ _____

Participant Date

Thank you for your consent to participate in this study.

APPENDIX I

SURVEY PACKET -- QUESTIONNAIRE

Mothers and Daughters: Education and Careers Questionnaire

This is part one of a two-part research project about mothers and daughters and their education and careers for my doctoral dissertation at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Participation is voluntary. Part one of this study is to gather some initial data on mothers and daughters and their career interests and levels of education. All information shared in this questionnaire will be confidential. No names will be used in the reporting of this information.

Please do not ask anyone for the answers to these questions. If you honestly don't know the answer to the question, please say so.

1) "What grade are you currently in?" Please circle one of the following: 9th or 10th

2) "Considering your physical and intellectual abilities, grades, available money, etc., how far do you expect to go in your schooling?" Please check one of the following.

____less than 12 years
____graduation from high school
____1-3 years of education beyond high school
____4-year college degree
____postgraduate degree, involving a year or more of full-time study beyond a 4-year degree

2) "How far do you think your mother wants you to go in school?" Please check one of the following.

____less than 12 years
____graduation from high school
____1-3 years of education beyond high school
____4-year college degree
____postgraduate degree, involving a year or more of full-time study beyond a 4-year degree

3) "How often has she mentioned your going that far?" Please check one of the following.

____Never
____Once or twice
____Occasionally
____Fairly often
____Often
____Very often

4) "What is your mother's level of education?" Please check one of the following.

____less than 12 years
____graduation from high school
____1-3 years of education beyond high school
____4-year college degree
____postgraduate degree, involving a year or more of full-time study beyond a 4-year degree
____don't know

5) "Is your mother currently in school?" Please circle either Yes or No

6) **"If your mother is currently in school, what kind of degree or certificate is she pursuing?"** Please check one of the following.

____**high school equivalent diploma**
____**trade school certificate**
____**community college degree**
____**four-year degree**
____**graduate school degree**
____**don't know**

7) **"What is your mother's level of employment?"** Please check one of the following.

____unemployed
____homemaker
____laborer (waitress, bus driver, sales person, etc.)
____semi-professional (librarian, teacher, administrator, etc.)
____professional (doctor, lawyer, executive, etc.)

8) **"What is your mother's profession?"** _____

9) **"How many hours a week does she work at this job?"_____hours.**

10) **"Do you have a job?"** Please circle either Yes or No

11) **"If you have a job, how many hours a week do you work at this job?"_____hours.**

12) **How do career and family fit into your future goals?** (If you need more room, please use the back of this questionnaire.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire. Your help with this study is greatly appreciated.

Part two of the study will be to conduct interviews with mother and daughter pairs individually to discuss their views on education and careers. Participation in this part of the study is also voluntary. If you and your mother are interested in participating, please write your name, your mother's name, and a telephone number where you and your mother may be reached. I will be happy to discuss with you the particulars for the next stage of this study.

_____
Your name

_____ _____
Your mother's name Telephone number

Address:_____

APPENDIX J

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL -- SURVEY REQUEST TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE

XYZ High School

Dear School Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to present to you my research proposal. I hope you will review the enclosed documents and allow me to conduct a mailing to all mothers who have daughters in their sophomore and junior years of high school at XYZ town.

My research is tentatively titled, *"The Intergenerational Transmission of Educational Values from Single, Working-class Mothers to their Adolescent Daughters in A Massachusetts Mill Town."* I have attached my abstract for your review.

Also attached is a packet consisting of a cover letter, a consent form, and a questionnaire that I would like your permission to send to the mothers of all sophomore and junior girls. This questionnaire is the first step toward identifying participants for the second part of the study, in which I will conduct in-depth interviews with mother and daughter pairs. I believe that the high school, particularly the guidance counselors, will find the results of the completed study most helpful in understanding the intergenerational values transmitted from mothers to daughters. This information may assist counselors in helping to transition female students to post-secondary education.

If you grant permission for this mailing, I will provide any necessary copies and postage, and will include a self-addressed stamped envelope for the convenience of returning the questionnaires.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay, M.Ed., A.B.D.

APPENDIX K

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL – SURVEY MEMO TO PRINCIPAL

XYZ, Principal
XYZ High School
XYZ Street
XYZ Town

Dear XYZ:

Thank you for speaking with me regarding my dissertation study and for discussing the possibility of distributing the enclosed survey to all sophomore and junior high school girls. Enclosed please find the following documents:

1) an abstract of the study;
2) the survey and consent form to be distributed; and
3) a letter introducing the study to the XYZ School Committee, just in case you need it.

If you need me to speak with either the Superintendent or the School Committee, please let me know and I'll be happy to. And, as we discussed, once the results of the study are complete, I will be happy to share them. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay

APPENDIX L

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL -- SURVEY PACKET MEMO

XYZ, Principal
XYZ High School
XYZ Street
XYZ Town

Dear XYZ:

Thank you for meeting with me last Friday. As per our conversation, enclosed are the survey packets for distribution to all sophomore and junior girls. Each packet contains the following:

1. a cover letter to the students,
2. a cover letter the mothers,
3. a consent form,
4. a two-page survey, and
5. a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

I have also included the note we discussed to all homeroom teachers who will distribute the surveys. Please feel free to change the distribution note as you see fit.

Once again, thank you for distributing these surveys and for your help with the School Committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay

APPENDIX M

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL – DIRECTIONS FOR HOMEROOM TEACHERS

HOME ROOM TEACHERS

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THESE SURVEYS TO YOUR FEMALE STUDENTS WITH THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION:

"Mary Jayne Fay, a local high school graduate, is working on her doctoral degree at UMass Amherst. She is conducting a survey about high school girls' views on education and work and she would like to hear from you.

I'm passing out a packet that includes a cover letter to you describing the survey. Please read the enclosed documents and consider participating in the survey. If you decide to participate, because you are under 18, you will need written permission from your mother; a consent form is included in the packet for this purpose. Once you have permission from your mother, please complete the survey, without discussing the questions with anyone. If you don't know an answer, that's OK. Complete the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Mary Jayne will greatly appreciate your help. After you discuss your participation with your mother and you both sign the consent form, please complete the survey and mail it in the attached stamped, self-addressed envelope provided for your convenience.

Thank you! Mary Jayne looks forward to hearing from you."

Teachers:

Thank you for distributing the surveys. I greatly appreciate your help.

Mary Jayne Fay

APPENDIX N

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM FOR STUDY OF THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF EDUCATIONAL VALUES FROM WORKING-CLASS MOTHERS TO THEIR ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS

I am volunteering to participate in a study of educational values of single mothers and their adolescent daughters. I understand that the purpose of the study is to learn more about the formal educational experiences of working-class mothers and their adolescent daughters and the resulting beliefs and values about education. The study is also to learn more about discussions mothers and daughters have with each other about education, and to learn more about the role that formal education plays in their lives.

As a participant, I give my permission to the interviewer to collect information in the form of two or three ninety- (90) minute audio taped interviews, which will also be transcribed by the interviewer. I understand that mothers and daughters will be interviewed separately and neither will be present during the interview of the other.

This study is being conducted by Mary Jayne Fay and will be used as part of her dissertation research at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The participant's information may be used in further publications by the researcher. There will be no remuneration for participating in this study. I understand that the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the XYZ High School are in no way responsible for this research.

I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that in any written materials or oral presentations using this material, a pseudonym will be used.

I understand that I have the following rights:

- To withdraw from the process at any time without prejudice,
- To choose my own pseudonym,
- To request that certain information, of my own words, be withheld from the final report,
- To review the audio tapes and transcripts of my own interview; and
- To review my final profile prior to dissemination.

_____ _____

Participant Date

_____ _____

Pseudonym as designated by participant Address & Phone

If the participant is under the age of eighteen (18) years, the consent form must also be signed by the participant's legal guardian. In order to protect the confidentiality of the minor participant, parental consent does not guarantee access to the minor's interview data.

_____ _____

Participant's Legal Guardian Date

I have been provided a copy of this consent form.

_____

Participant's initials

Thank you for your consent to participate in this study.

_____

Mary Jayne Fay
Should you need to get in touch with me, I may be reached at:
XXX home, please call collect; or XXX work

APPENDIX O

CHART OF PARTICIPANT PROFILES – MOTHERS

Topic	Vivian	Jane	Hannah	Rexene	Helga	Laura	Anna
Daughter	Tricia	Ryan	Lynn	Marque	Nickita	Leigh	Lisa
Age	39	42	34	41	45	38	36
# of siblings	11	3	0	4, 3 stepbrothers	8	5	2
Rank in birth order	5th youngest (is a twin)	Youngest		Youngest	Youngest	Second to youngest	
Highest grade completed	12	16 BS in nursing	15	12	13	13.5	12
Ed history	May have been held back in 5th grade; A's & B's in business track courses; took one college course; interested in more, but is disabled; best subj: Accounting	Went to nursery school; A's and B's in college track courses; took advanced math and science; was on honor roll in high school; "was a good achiever"; takes continuing education courses	A's and B's; HS drop out (pregnancy); obtained GED; favorite subj. English; Worst subject: "suck at math"; finishing BA	Repeated first grade; "Barely passed"; (problems with reading); worst subject: math; best subject: science	Used to fake being ill so she wouldn't have to go to elementary school (may have been afraid of nuns); taken banking courses; worst subject: "math sucked" and was a poor speller; best subject: history	A's & B's in business track courses; worst subject: history; has a 4.0 in college	Struggled in high school but attained passing grades; had help from special education teacher with reading and math

High school extracur-ricular Activi-ties	Softball, basket ball; held a job	Choir, church, Girl Scouts, piano, French horn, trumpet, marching band, drama, math club, Honor Society	Swim team, newspaper editor	Track	None	Twirling, Gong Show, substitute cheerlead-er	None
Current occupa-tion	Disabled homemak-er	Nurse	Full-time student; homemak-er	Self-employed landscaper	Banking	Lumber yard	Foster parent
Types of occupa-tions held	Banking, education-al consultant	Nursing	Homemak-er, retail, fast food, mortgage lending, labtech, taught CPR & CNA	Nurse's aide, factory work, dental assistant, security	Homemak-er, customer service, clerical, retail, admin assistant (experien-ced # of layoffs)	Picking tobacco, restaurant work, office cleaning, office work, store clerk, bank teller	Homemak-er, factory work, bar assistant
Occupa-tional aspira-tions	Physical health limits aspira-tions	None mentioned	Photo-journalist (formerly lawyer or pediatri-cian)	None mentioned	None mentioned	Occupa-tional Therapist	None mentioned
Marital status	Divorced, remarried (met first husband in high school)	Married	Divorced, remarried (never married to daughter's father)	Divorced, remarried	Divorced, live-in boyfriend	Separated (second time) (met husband in high school)	Divorced, remarried
Age at time of first birth	23	26	17	21	28	22	21
Age at time of daughter' s birth	23	26	17	25	28	22	21
Number of children	2	2	3 (ages 17, 14, 3), plus 2 foster kids	3 (ages 14, 16, 20?)	1	2	2 (ages 12 & 16)

APPENDIX P

CHART OF PARTICIPANT PROFILES – DAUGHTERS

Topic	Tricia	Ryan	Lynn	Marque	Nickita	Leigh	Lisa
Mother	Vivian	Jane	Hannah	Rexene	Helga	Laura	Anna
Age	16	16	17	16	17	15	16
# of siblings	1	1	2, plus foster children	2	0	2	1 and foster children
Rank in birth order	Eldest	Eldest	Eldest	Middle (eldest at home, eldest daughter)	Only child	Eldest	Eldest
Highest grade complet-ed	10	10	11	10	11	9	10
Ed history	Catholic element-ary school; A's, B's, and C's; one honors course; intends to take AP courses; favorite subject: psycholo-gy; worst subjects: math, art	A's; took PSAT's; takes honors courses; intends to take AP courses; "I was always the smartest kid in class"; considered transfer-ring to a high school for gifted in science & math	A's, B's, one C; was in gifted & talented in element-ary school; takes honors courses, intends to take AP courses; SAT 1060; favorite subjects: English & history; worst subject: Spanish & "I'm not good with numbers."	A's, B's; took honors biology; intends to take AP courses; favorite subject: science; worst subject: math	A's, B's, C's and D in math; takes honors course, except in math; favorite subject: history; worst subject: math	Montes-sori preschool; Christian elemen-tary school; A's, B's, C's; considered transfer-ring to a technical high school; favorite subject: history; worst subject: math & Spanish	B's, C's, D's; worst subject: French

HS extra-curricular	Student rep for school committee; mock trials; junior class president; formerly field hockey	Peer education, math tutor, piano, French horn, Girl Scouts, Rainbow Girls, church choir, community tv station, drama, National Honor Society	Student council, SADD, volleyball, peer education, basketball cheerleading, kickboxing; National Honor Society	Student council, cheerleading, chorus, honor roll, National Honor Society; formerly softball and field hockey; science fair	SADD	Volleyball, student council officer, piano, chorus	Football cheerleader, coaches Pop Warner cheerleading
Current occupation	Student, food service (pizza parlor)	Student, lifeguard, swim instructor	Student	Student, babysitter	Student	Student	Student
Types of occupations held	Babysitter	Summer camp counselor	Babysitter, clerk, office worker	Library volunteer	Babysitter	Babysitter	Babysitter, food service
Occupational aspirations	Child psychologist	ER physician	International business	Nursing	Medicine, physician or ultrasound diagnostician	Lawyer	Hairdresser or cosmetologist

APPENDIX Q

CHART OF PARTICIPANT PROFILES – GRANDMOTHERS

Topic	Vivian's Mother; Tricia's grand-mother	Jane's Mother; Ryan's grand-mother	Hannah's Mother; Lynn's grand-mother	Rexene's Mother; Marque's grand-mother	Helga's Mother; Nickita's grand-mother	Laura's Mother; Leigh's grand-mother	Anna's Mother; Lisa's grand-mother
Highest grade complet-ed		Master's (ivy league), after last child went to college	Master's		BSW, after last child went to school		
Ed history	High school		Went back for bachelor's when Hannah was in school; completed Master's later	High school drop out; pregnant at 16	High school; went to nursing school, but dropped out to get married; father was an MD, mother was a nurse	High school	High school
HS extracur-ricular						Figure skater, majorette	
Current occupa-tion		none	Postal worker			Artist	
Types of occupa-tions held	Homemak-er	Homemak-er, reading teacher	Beautician (while supporting she and Hannah), banking, retail	Homemak-er	Homemak-er	Homemak-er, waitress, aide at Montessor i school	Homemak-er
Marital status		Widower, remarried after last child went to college	Divorced Hannah's father; remarried				
Number of children	12	4	1	4	9	6	3

APPENDIX R

PARTICIPANT PAIR PROFILE SUMMARIES

Vivian and Tricia:

Vivian was a high school graduate, with one college course under her belt in which she proudly attained an A. She was divorced from her two children's father and had since remarried. She referred to her ex-husband as a "dead beat dad" and she solely supported her children between marriages. Vivian was a former bank teller who held a number of jobs and suffered a number of layoffs. At the time of the interviews she was a homemaker and on disability for an undiagnosed illness. Vivian's mother was a high school graduate, and her father dropped out of school in sixth grade; however, in his 50's, he obtained a GED and then went to seminary school to become a deacon. Tricia had just completed tenth grade at the time of the interviews where she attained mostly A's and B's after having taken her first honors level courses. Tricia would like to become a child psychologist.

Jane and Ryan:

Jane had a bachelor's degree in nursing, had taken some graduate school courses, and had worked as a nurse for over a decade. At the time of the interviews she was married and was the primary breadwinner for a family with two children and a husband. Jane's mother graduated with a double major from a woman's Ivy league college and returned to school to obtain a master's degree after Jane finished college. Her father had a master's degree from Cornell and died when Jane was a child. Bother her maternal and paternal grandparents went to college as did paternal uncles and an aunt, whose daughter also went to college. All of Jane's siblings also went to college, with the eldest brother obtaining a graduate degree. After Jane's father death, her mother was the sole supporter of the family. Jane's mother always read to her, and Jane was proud of "being a family of readers" and felt it was her "turn to carry through the generation." Ryan, a straight A student, was in tenth grade at the time of the interviews, and she expected to be the class valedictorian. Ryan participated in an extraordinary number of extra-curricular activities and has set her sights on becoming an emergency room physician.

Hannah and Lynn:

Hannah dropped out of high school in tenth grade to give birth to her daughter. She worked as a waitress to support the two of them and later married, had another child, and then divorced. Along the way she obtained her GED and remarried once again, and, for a short while, was the primary breadwinner for the family of five. She now has a third child and two foster children. She is currently a housewife and college student nearing completion of her bachelor's degree. Hannah's mother, step-father, and biological father returned to college late in life; her mother obtained a master's degree. Lynn was in eleventh grade at the time of the interviews where she attained mostly A's and B's and had taken honors level courses. Lynn wants to become an international business woman.

Rexene and Marque:

Rexene was a high school graduate who passed by the "skin of my teeth." She married soon after high school and had one child. She went on welfare to support she and her son and experienced great trauma with her living situation. Eventually she married, gave birth to Marque, later divorced, remarried, and had another child. At the time of the interviews she was self-employed as a landscaper. Rexene's mother dropped out of high school to give birth, and her father never graduated from high school. Marque was in tenth grade at the time of the interviews where she attained A's and B's and had taken honors level courses. Marque wanted to become a nurse.

Helga and Nickita:

Helga was a high school graduate who had taken some college coursework and some banking courses. Since divorcing Nickita's father, she held a number of jobs and had suffered a series of layoffs. At the time of the interviews, she was a single mother of one child with a long-term live-in boyfriend and was employed full-time as an ATM manager. Helga described her mother as being "too busy with eight children" to be involved with Helga's schoolwork. Her mother returned to school late in life to obtain a bachelor's degree. Nickita was in eleventh grade at the time of the interviews where she attained mostly A's and B's, except in math where she has extraordinary difficulty. Nickita participated in one extra-curricular activity. Nickita wants to become a pediatrician or an ultrasound technician.

Laura and Leigh:

Laura married soon after graduation from high school and had two children. When she and her husband separated, she went on welfare to support herself and her children. She took classes at local college and was six credit shy of an associate's degree. Her husband later returned to the family and she returned to work when kids were in school. At the time of the interviews, she and her husband were once again separated, and Laura was currently supporting family while waiting for their divorce to become final. Laura's mother was a high school graduate and her father dropped out of high school. Leigh had just completed ninth grade at the time of the interviews where she attained mostly A's, B's, and C's. Leigh wants to go to law school.

Anna and Lisa:

Anna married soon after her graduation from high school and had one child before divorcing her husband. She supported the two of them by working as a waitress and factory worker. She later remarried, had another child, and at the time of the interviews was caring for her own children plus several foster children. Anna believed that both of her parents graduated from high school. Her sister graduated high school, but her brother dropped out and obtained his GED. Lisa had just completed tenth grade at the time of their one interview where she attained A's, B's, and C's. Lisa wants to become a cosmetologist. These participants did not complete the series of interviews.

APPENDIX S

PARTICIPANT PAIR EDUCATIONAL SUMMARIES

Vivian and Tricia:

A number of sad memories surfaced when Vivian reflected on her educational experiences, including when she and her twin were placed into separate elementary school classrooms, Vivian was held back in fifth grade. In later years she was involved in sports (softball, basketball, track), but dropped them in sophomore year to work. Much of Vivian's sad memories had to do with "not knowing why I wasn't good enough to fit in" and being envious of the "stats" (popular kids). She relayed several stories where she felt outside of the group or that the school had favored a "stat" over her. Additionally, she reported being "boy crazy" in high school, where she met her first husband.

Vivian reported attaining A through D's, with straight A's in accounting. However, she was caught cheating in Honors History in high school. She was aware of tracking, "in HS you either took college courses or you took business courses, and obviously accounting was a business course."

Vivian felt she was "totally in the dark how to do it [go to college]" and blamed school for not giving her more information on college. She felt the school should have checked on her grades periodically and exposed her to possible college options. She felt this was done for the stats; "they're the ones that got the attention, got comforted and were taken to here and there, they had smiles on their faces all of the time." Vivian felt school did not stimulate her, her goals, her future, and felt "ripped off" as a result.

Tricia attained A's, B's, and C's in high school where her favorite subject was psychology and sociology. Her worst subject was math, because she fell behind during a while attending a technical school. At the time of the interviews she was taking honors courses and planned to take AP courses, which were reserved for the juniors and seniors. Tricia reported that her high school class was "really smart," and that even if a student ranks 45th in the class he or she could still have straight A's. Tricia was active in extracurricular activities where she was the student representative to the school committee and was elected junior class president (and was elected class president in 7th grade, but did not want it as she ran only because her mother "forced" her to).

Tricia was considering a career working with children, either in child development, psychology, or education. Tricia spoke disparagingly about community colleges, but did not consider herself Harvard material since did not have the grades.

Jane and Ryan:

Both of Jane's parents had master's degrees from Ivy League colleges. After Jane went to college, her mother returned to college to get a second master's degree in remedial reading. Jane said that her mother invested in a set of World Book Encyclopedias. "We're a great family of readers, and my grandmother was a great reader and always had a book and my mother, her daughter, was also quite a reader, and so it's my turn to carry through the generation."

Jane attained A's and B's in high school; "I was a good achiever." She was involved in the marching band, honor society, and drama club. Outside of school she was

involved in the Girl Scouts, church choir, and took French lessons. She reports that she used to get upset with teachers and thought she could tell them how to teach (but did not). "I was more driven by the teacher and which teachers I liked and what the presentation was." While growing up, her best friend was a straight-A student and became a physician.

Jane first became interested in nursing in 8th grade health class. The family doctor recommended a private four-year college that his daughter attended. Jane obtained a bachelor's degree in nursing and where she was initially on the dean's list. In addition to her college degree, she had taken a couple of master's level courses and CEU's required for her nursing license.

Ryan's experiences with education belie a competitive nature. As a child when she was sick in the mornings, she did not tell parents because she wanted to go to school. In first grade the students did a project on what they wanted to be at age 21 and Ryan envisioned that she would be finished with college, have two kids, be married, and have a car and a house. "I was very ambitious. I was smart like normal. I was always the smartest kid in the class. I'm not one of those people who can sit still. I still never missed a homework assignment in my entire life. I don't study a lot."

Ryan attained all A's, and informed me that this was her own standard and not a parental expectation. At the time of the interviews she was taking honors courses and would take AP courses her junior year. She competed with her friends, mostly males, to achieve the best grades and expected to be class valedictorian. She was "amazed by how little education teachers have" and has some strong convictions about how they can teach better. Her weakest subjects were spelling and history while her best subjects were math and science. Ryan had an opportunity to apply to a specialized science academy for her junior and senior years of high school, which was affiliated with a technical college and where students can earn college credit.

Ryan was involved in a number of extracurricular activities, which included dancing, swimming, band, video club, drama club, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), National Honor Society, and tutor other students in math. She briefly tried soccer and basketball but because of bad hip she can no longer run. Outside of school she was involved in the Girl Scouts, Rainbow Girls, church and choir, and took French horn and piano lessons. She volunteered at the local community television station and at the YMCA where she worked as a lifeguard.

In thinking ahead to college, Ryan determined that she wanted to go to a coed school. She will apply to Harvard, but wants to go to Yale. She admitted to being "too stuck up to go to [a community college]. I refuse. I've got to meet a whole new community of people." Ryan considered being a minister and a teacher, but wanted to be a pediatric doctor in the emergency room.

Hannah and Lynn:

Hannah was "always a good student" who was an early reader and attended pre-school. In school she attained A's and B's, and loved English, but hated math. She was on the swim team and was a newspaper editor, but she dropped out of high school in her junior year due to pregnancy and obtained a GED, which "was not a difficult test." At the time of the interviews she was back in college and described herself as a "perpetual senior" where she formerly studied nursing and writing, but now wanted to be a

photojournalist. As a child she wanted to be a pediatrician, a gymnast, a lawyer, and a writer.

Lynn had always done well in school, attaining A's and B's with an occasional C. At the time of the interviews she was taking all honors classes and reported liking English and history, but did not like science and math. She was a member of the National Honor Society, the student council, SADD, the volleyball team, peer education, the cheerleading squad and on the weekends took kickboxing lessons and babysat. Lynn considered being an actress and a lawyer and wanted to pursue international business.

Rexene and Marque:

Rexene reported not liking school, "I was glad to get out of school…I just didn't want to be there…I just absorbed it all and counted my days and my years till I could get out of school." She said her grades were not always good, B's and C's with D's in math and English, which, in ninth grade, resulted in her going to summer school in order to pass English. She recalled loving science, but not doing well in math. While she had a lot of friends, she reported not doing "drugs, [or] nothing bad because I was always smarter than that. In the back of my head I always knew that I would have to pay the consequences." In high school she was involved in volleyball, track, and cross-country running and was a little sister in Big Brother/Big Sister. She said she "knew I wasn't going to college because that's, it was hard for me to sit still…I like to be outdoors." Rexene considered veterinary school, being a jockey, a chef, or going into agriculture.

Ashley reported having always liked school and has wanted to go to college since second or third grade. She was an honor student, attained mostly A's, and was a member of the National Honor Society. Ashley took honors courses (AP courses are only available to seniors) and wanted to do an internship to explore medical careers. She loved science, but did not like math; "it's hard." She reported that education is a struggle and stressful at times because of the amount of work and the little time. However, she managed to find the time to be a cheerleader and be involved in Student Council, chorus, and participate in community service (reading to children in the library) in addition to occasionally babysitting. Ashley considered becoming a teacher, a doctor, a chef, and wanted to become a nurse.

Helga and Nickita:

Helga's reflection on her educational experiences raised sadness and anger within her. She did not want to go to school and pretended to be sick so often that she was sent to a doctor, who could not find anything wrong with her. Helga went to a Catholic school and spoke poorly of her teachers (e.g., "bitches," "not human," "holier than thou," "disciplinarians") and told stories of nuns hitting students using yardsticks and clackers. She was so afraid of her teachers that on one occasion she did not dare tell the nuns she had to go to the bathroom and instead messed herself. Helga could not be involved in extracurricular activities due to lack of transportation (busses only ran once a day). She felt she was just one of the crowd and did not stand out.

Helga reported passing high school "by the skin of my teeth" and doing "what I had to do to get by." "I wasn't as serious as I should have been." History was her favorite subject, particularly the Civil War era and she liked science. She disliked math and English (an admitted poor speller) and says difficulty with both subjects runs in the

family. In fact, Helga had such a difficult time with math that when faced with taking a math course in college she said she got married instead and to this day feels that math held her back from becoming a dental assistant.

Nickita was in the Junior National Honor Society and on the high school honor roll attaining A's and B's. She wanted to get a perfect attendance award since she had not been absent since ninth grade. She was involved in one extracurricular activities in school, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions).

Nickita attained A's and B's in everything except math where she barely passed. Math was particularly difficult for Nickita, and her mother made arrangements for her to get help before school, but she never went. In fact, her mother reports that Nickita lied to her mother about going for extra help. Her favorite subject was history.

Nickita reported being afraid to fail, being afraid of her GPA dropping, being afraid of not being the best. Additionally, she relayed a history of nervousness associated with school changes. At the beginning of junior high school she did not want to go and told her mother she was sick, but "sucked it up" and went. When faced with high school, she was again nervous, but went. Facing the prospect of college she reported being "scared" and that she's a "mommy's girl." Nickita has toyed with several career paths including a police officer, veterinarian, interior designer, dentist, archeologist, ultrasound technician, and wanted to become a pediatrician.

Laura and Leigh:

Laura attained A's, B's, and C's in high school, preferring English, French, math classes. She reported that her classes were chosen for her by the schools. She was a self-described "goofy" kid who was quiet, shy, and withdrawn. She was so shy that she told a teacher that she had laryngitis so she would not have to do an oral report.

Laura's memories of high school and her teachers were very positive. To Laura, teachers were like "surrogate parents. They wanted to teach you and they wanted you to learn. They wanted you to take part in certain things, and I didn't get that with my own parents…it was like they wanted me to be a part of school…I liked being part of a school family kind of thing because that's the way it was when I was in school." School aides would call home if she skipped lunch to make sure she was not sick. She felt that "back then there was a caring aspect; if something was wrong the teachers asked you to stay after school and talked to you about it; they cared whether you failed or succeeded, that made a big difference for me and a lot of the kids I went to school with." In fact, after transferring to another school, one of her former teachers tutored Laura to help her pass a class at her new school.

Laura was involved in a few extracurricular activities as a substitute cheerleader, acting in one-act plays and the Gong Show, and she received first place ribbon in school science fair. Beginning at fourteen years old she worked summers in the tobacco fields and worked at local restaurants. In eleventh grade she transferred to another high school so she could live with her boyfriend. In retrospect she wished she had not transferred as it was difficult to make up for deficient academics at her former high school. Laura was in business track courses, but wished she had taken college preparatory classes. She noted that you were either "at the bottom of the totem pole, the middle of the totem pole, or at the top of the totem pole. You were either smart or you weren't. You either had

middle classes or you had upper classes." Laura attended college and was two classes shy of associate's degree in occupational therapy with a 4.0 average.

Leigh did not report on her grades during our interviews, but did say that she would be grounded if she did not keep her grades up, and she may have to attend summer school to make up a failed Spanish class. Her best subject was history and her worst subjects were math, because she was "not really good at it." She was involved in several extracurricular activities including chorus, volleyball, class secretary, and private piano lessons. She planned to take honors English in tenth grade. She said she does not study, but did her homework and, because she failed Spanish, she thought she should study more next year. Her mother reported that she was suspended briefly for disobeying the vice principal.

In elementary school Leigh wanted to become a veterinarian and wanted to go to college right then. At the time of the interviews she wanted to become a lawyer because she was told that she argued well, but also considered becoming a disc jockey, cosmetologist, and chef; the latter two options prompted her to apply to the local technical high school, but she had not made a decision whether to go.

Anna and Lisa:

Anna reported little recollection of her school experiences. To Anna, "school's no big deal. I mean I graduated. I got passing grades. College is not for me; school wasn't my favorite." She reported that high school was boring, her classes were chosen for her, and that she did not participate in any extracurricular activities because she was very shy. While in high school, she received "special help" with reading and her coursework from a woman with whom she still keeps in touch. As far as coursework, she said she hated history because she hated the teacher. Anna's strongest memories about school were that cheerleaders were snobs and her annoyance at being asked in eight grade what she wanted to do with her life as she felt she was too young to know.

Lisa reported attaining A's, B's, and C's in high school where her worst subject was French. She reported that her best subject was history because the teacher talked with her more one-on-one. She had spoken with a guidance counselor about course choices. Lisa was a football cheerleader and coached Pop Warner football cheerleading after school. Lisa was considering beauty school and could not wait to get out of school so she could get a job.

APPENDIX T

TOPICAL GUIDE

Participant: **Pseudonym:** Interview 1: _____
2: _____
3: _____

What messages are working-class mothers giving to their adolescent daughters about education and its value?

TOPIC AREA: Interview #:

Education:	1	2	3
Discussion with mother about education?			
Messages from mother about education?			
Discussion or messages from family members about education?			
Discussion or messages with others about education?			
FOR MOTHERS ONLY:			
What messages do you try to give your daughter about education?			
What messages do you think your daughter will say you've told her about education?			
What are your parents' levels of education?			

Future Plans:	1	2	3
Future plans for education?			
Future plans for work?			
Discussion with mother about education & work goals/aspirations?			
Messages from mother about education & work goals/aspirations?			
Preparation, if any, for aspirations/goals (e.g., coursework, colleges, finances)?			
Source, if any of procedural knowledge?			
Mother's involvement in daughter's preparation?			
Any home experiences/activities provided relative to their goals and aspirations?			
Or, any home experiences/activities lead to their current goals and aspirations?			
Education-related and work-related beliefs and values?			

Role Models:	1	2	3
Feelings/perceptions of mother's/maternal grandmother's education and work?			
Any role models/whom do they look up to?			
From whom do they get education/career advice?			
Did/do they have a mentor?			

Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to add?
If you could say anything about education and careers to whomever is listening, what would you like to say?

APPENDIX U

PARTICIPANTS' MEMO -- FIRST MEMBER CHECK

Dear Study Participant:

I'd like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your participation in this study for my doctoral program. The time you spent with me and providing me with information about your thoughts and ideas about work and education, and the discussions you've had about them with your mother, are very important to this study. Now that the transcription is complete, the work is progressing rapidly, and the analysis is nearing completion.

As part of my agreement with you, you are welcome to a copy of your transcribed interviews. I will be happy to email them to you or send you a hard copy. Additionally, your pair profiles are complete along with a chart of basic information about your educational and work experiences that will be included in the appendix of the study. If you would like a copy of any of these documents, please let me know by phone or email. Also, if you haven't already chosen a pseudonym, it's not too late!

You'll be happy to learn that the baby is happy and healthy and while she's slowed the dissertation process a little, she's added a dimension to the mother/daughter discussions you've shared with me that I doubt I would have understood without her in my life. Below is a picture of her helping me to type and a picture several months later with excerpts from your transcripts lining the bedroom wall.

Thank you for your patience in this lengthy process. I hope you are happy and healthy.

Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay

Phone: XXX, Email: XXX

APPENDIX V

PARTICIPANTS' MEMO -- SECOND MEMBER CHECK

Dear Study Participant:

In late February I will be presenting the final version of the dissertation to my committee for review. As part of my agreement with you, you are welcome to review the final draft prior to submission to the University. Additionally, the offer is still available if you would like to review your summary profile and your transcripts prior to submitting the study. If you would like a copy of any of these documents, please let me know by phone or email. Also, if you haven't already chosen a pseudonym, it's not too late!

I'd like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your participation in this study for my doctoral program. The time you spent with me and providing me with information about your thoughts and ideas about work and education, and the discussions you've had about them with your mother, are very important to this study.

Thank you for your patience in this lengthy process. I hope you are happy and healthy.

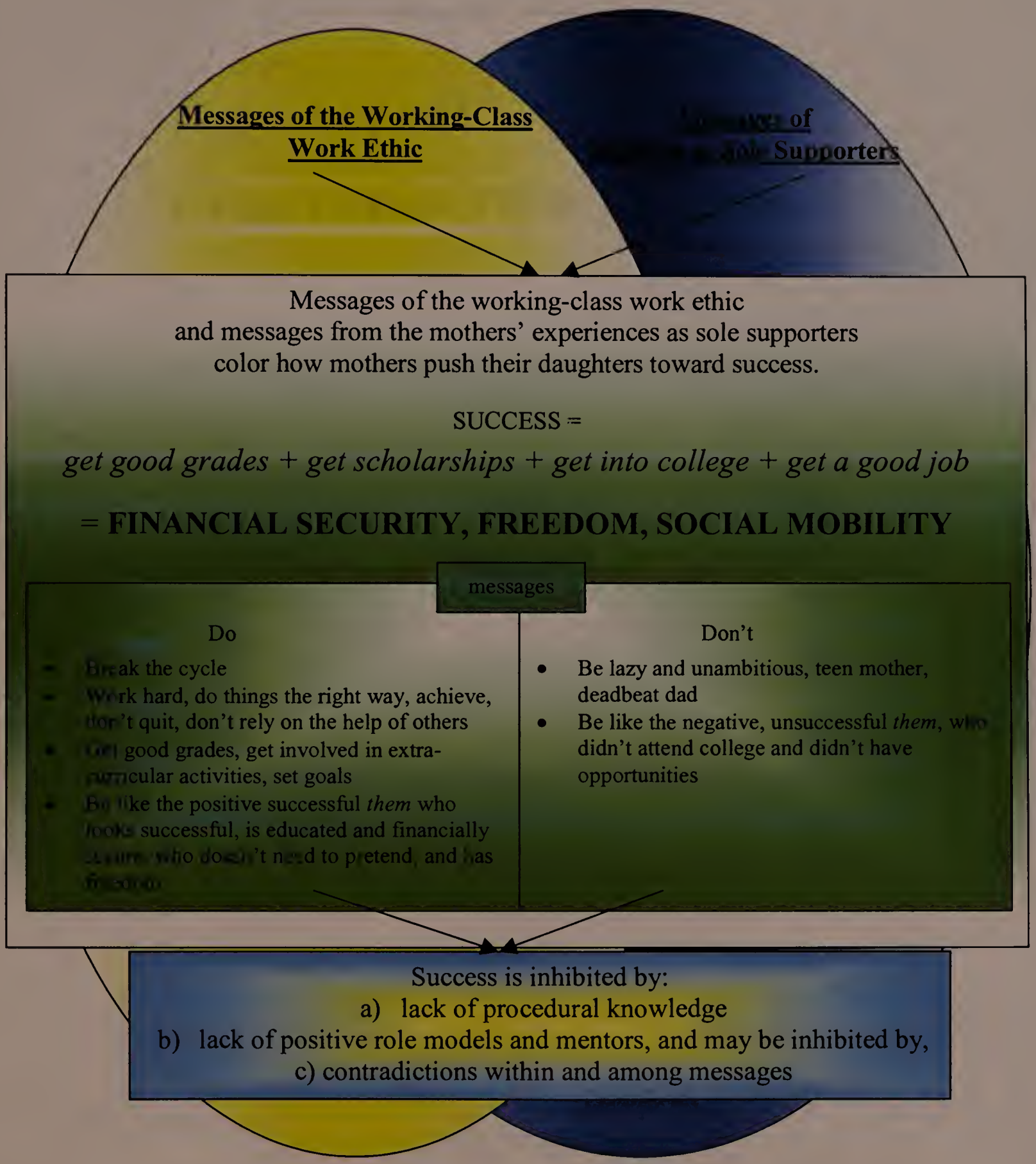
Sincerely,

Mary Jayne Fay

Phone: XXX
Email: XXX

APPENDIX W

GRAPHIC



APPENDIX X

CHART OF CLASS VALUES: WORKING CLASS V. MIDDLE CLASS

Study participants provided messages about the values of the working-class and the work of Lutrell (1984), Grimes and Morris (1997), and the seminal works of Sennett and Cobb (1972) and Kohn (1977) helped define the values of the working and middle classes. Note: Many of these values and attributions are based on perceptions and stereotypes of one class about the other class and should not be considered absolutes.

Working-Class	Middle-Class
The work of the working-class is based more on manual, semi-skilled labor (blue and pink collar); less prestigious, but consider their work "real work"	The work of the middle-class is considered more mental; more prestigious in that they manage others and work with ideas, not the body
Image: dirty, lunch boxes, uniforms	Image: clean, suit, briefcase, desks/offices
Value work that results in a product; devalue work done by educated people (development of concepts, research)	Value working with concepts and ideas; devalues products laborers, craftspeople, artisans
Have the ability to fix the widget	Have the ability to design and develop the widget
Value commonsense and street smarts (the ability to fix things; to figure out how things work); the ability to be successful coping with everyday life (believe that educated people don't have this ability)	Value intelligence ("schoolwise"), creativity, intellectual independence (Luttrell, 1984)
Value self-education; informal education; education of experience, "hands-on" mode	Value credentials, formal education; education centered on language, mental mode
Post secondary education encouraged, but with skepticism	Post-secondary education is assumed or considered "a way of life"
Both assume educated people are employable	
Higher education as occupational preparation; as credential for social mobility; means of financial, social, and professional improvement	Higher education as self-improvement; part of marriage ritual to meet future husband ("Mrs." degree); credential for social capital; means for intellectual growth, development, and flexibility, brings a breadth of perspective and tolerance of non-conformity (Kohn, 1977)

Higher education will bring financial security so they won't have to live paycheck to paycheck	(may also live paycheck to paycheck)
	Higher education is prerequisite for fostering achievement minded, future-oriented, independent, and upwardly mobile adult who will not be tied to any particular beliefs, community or place
Education may alienate them from their family, friends, and community	Education is more important than family, friends, and community
College degree is "proof" of intelligence and competence (yet educated people are scary and they don't have any common sense)	College degree is a sign of commitment (4 years to complete a degree) and evidence of content knowledge
Education is not a reason to treat others as "less than" nor does it mean that people with education should be given preferential treatment	
Success is having done a good job, paying bills, supporting one's self and one's family	Success is being a good citizen (voting, volunteering), intellectual and personal growth and development
No mention of types of job to aspire to	Assume employment will be in the professions
Parents hope children will attend college; but it's not an expectation due to lack of finances and procedural knowledge	Parents expect their children will go to college
Believe in the myth that if you pursue education, then you will be rewarded with a better job and a better life	Investments (savings, retirement accounts, stocks/bonds)

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